

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

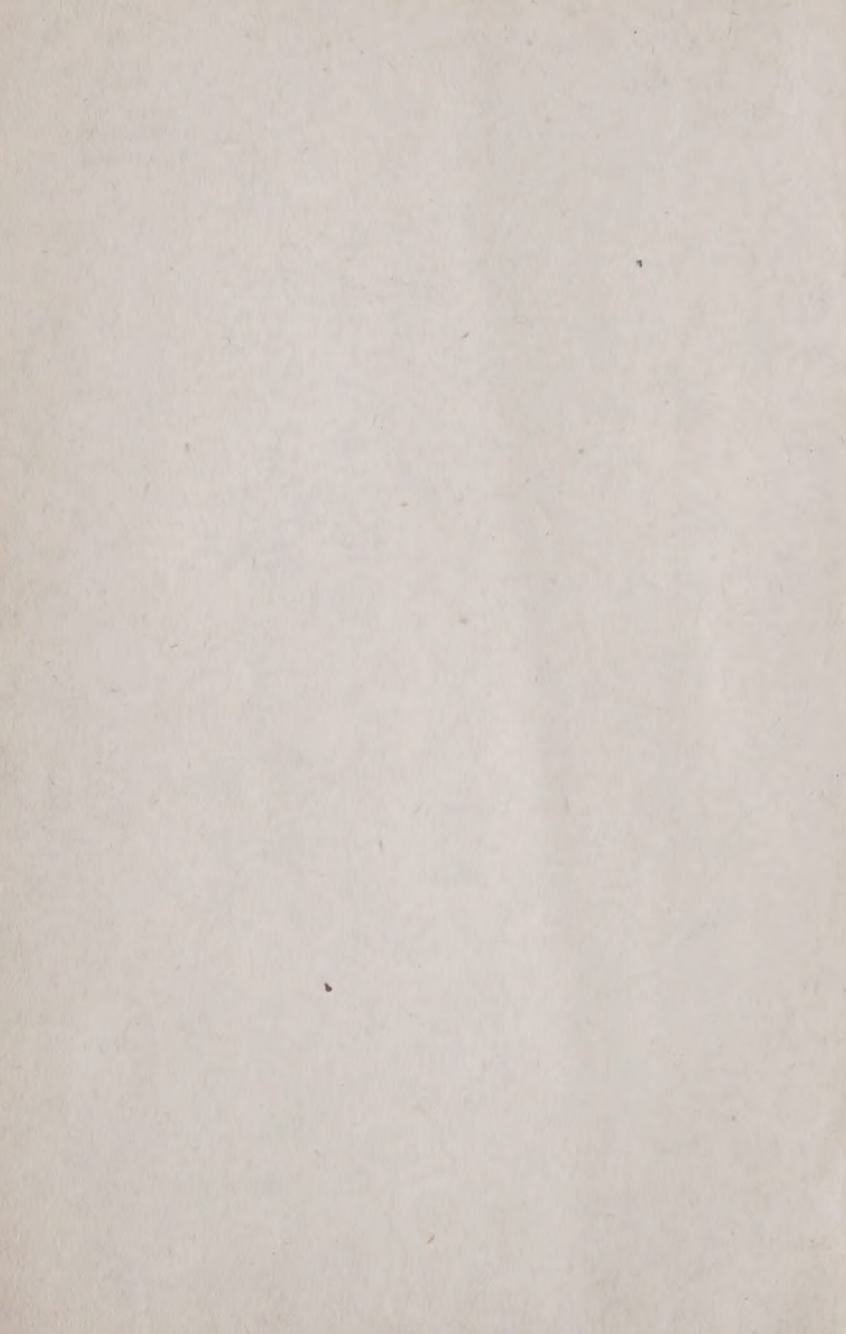
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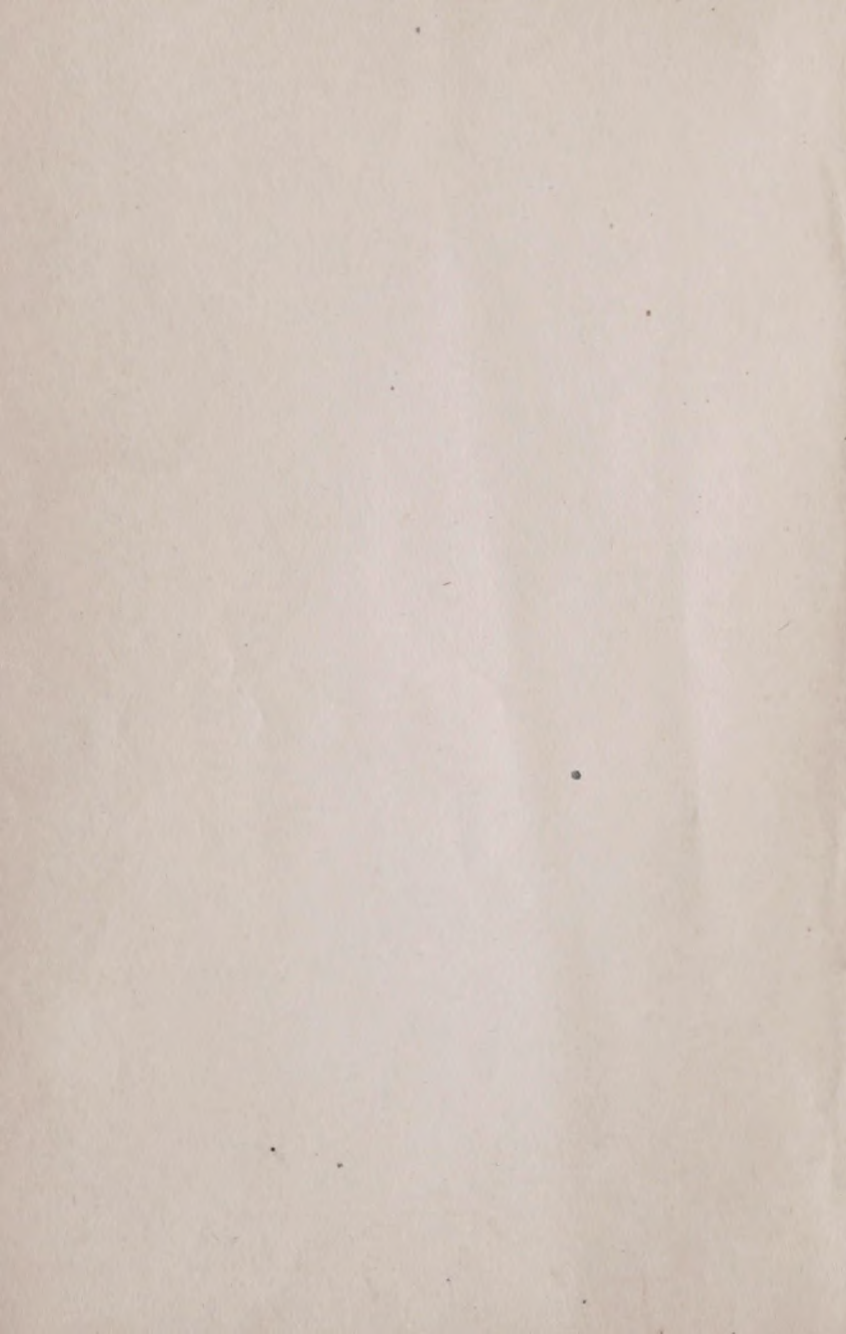
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THE
BIRTHDAY PARTY

AND OTHER STORIES

A Book for Girls.



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THE BIRTHDAY PARTY.

FAR back amid the scenes of the past my mind has been roving to-night, in my childhood's home, with my childhood's friends. Dear little friends, how I loved you then! How certain I felt that nothing in this world could change my love. But the years that have intervened have brought a change, how or why I can not tell; but well I know that many of those whom I dearly loved as children, I cannot love as women. Among them all there are only two whom I really love now; and it is a letter from one of them that has brought me this train of thought.

We lived very near each other — Lel Seagrave and I. A beautiful little house, around whose pillared porch, green vines and climbing roses twined. A lawn shaded by ornamental trees stretched in front, and a gravelled walk, bordered by pretty flowers, led to the front door. That was Lel's home. Close beside it rose an humble, low-roofed cottage, to whose red walls a paint brush had long been a stranger. The walk leading to the front door, as well as the flower borders, was overrun with weeds; and upon the lawn grew a solitary crab-apple tree, which when loaded with its bright red fruit, looked almost as pretty as any of Mr. Seagrave's more expensive trees. This was my home. Lel's parents were rich and mine were poor; so it has always been a wonder to me that Mrs. Seagrave chose me for her daughter's companion, because she was usually very particular about the social standing of Lel's associates. Though a trifle proud she was charitable — ever ready to give to the sick

and poor — so that when my dear father was prostrated by a tedious illness, and my mother obliged to take in work for our support, she not only gave her a great deal of work, but obtained it from others for her. This and much more besides, made me love her very dearly.

Generally speaking, it is not for the mutual advantage of a rich and a poor girl to be so intimate as Lel and I were. It is apt to make one proud and imperious, the other obsequiously yielding, unless she is high-spirited, in which case there is a great deal of wrangling. I was not high-spirited, but very shy, timid, and usually yielding; so we never had any serious trouble but once.

Lel's birthday would be in June, and she was going to have a party, to which she would invite all the "large girls" of our school. She told me all about it very early in May. We were to play out doors during the day, take tea on the lawn, and in the evening there would be a magic-lantern exhibition. In the meantime my birthday

would come, and I wanted a new dress ; but everything was so dear that I did not expect anything so expensive. I was sitting at the day's close, working very hard over one of those hateful examples in arithmetic, and did not notice my father as he came into the room, until he said :

“ Well, Annie, have you made out that puzzle ? ”

I raised my head to answer, and saw a suspicious-looking package in his hands, which he immediately placed in my lap. Very eagerly I untied it, and there, sure enough, was just what I wanted — a white muslin !

I wore it just once to church before Lel's party ; but that had made it all the better in my estimation. I was only a child, and need not blush to own that I stood a long time before the glass that day.

“ I hope you will behave yourself,” my mother had said, and I intended to do so.

Laura Fallon and Clara Arnold, the smartest and hatefulest girls in the school,

were already there when I arrived, and we began to play "I spy." But when all the "large girls" (very large we were, having reached the venerable age of twelve), had come, we played "floating island"; that is a blindfolded girl, floated upon the lawn until she found another girl. She must guess who this was; and if rightly, the bandage was placed on the eyes of the "caught."

The plan of the game is, first to blindfold the island's eyes, then the rest may take any place in the prescribed limits; next they call out "floating island," after which call no one moves. The play is very exciting and interesting; but in this, as in greater things, cheating is sure to bring trouble. We played long and gleefully; and at length Mrs. Seagrave said it was about train time, and just then a shrill whistle sounded. Immediately, front doors opened, and there was a rush to the bank. Such a medley; there stood dainty dames of fashion; some in bright robes; some in

mourner's weeds, their jewelled fingers resting upon the rough board fence; nor did they note the red hand and freckled arm of the hard working washer-woman beside them. For awhile social distinction was forgotten; they stood there as women, sisters; and why should they not, when rich and poor had alike given dear ones to their country's service?

There were children, too — big girls and little girls; little boys in petticoats, and brave, sturdy lads, whose heart's wish was that they were older. All, stood with handkerchief in hand, watching the train as it came thundering down. Poor fellows! I cannot think of them after all these years without deep feelings; so fresh and bright they looked in their blue suits waving their snowy handkerchiefs so gayly. Away, away they sped, many of them never to return; beneath southern skies they sleep, perhaps, beside their grey clad brothers, against whom their sword was drawn. As I stood there I felt only love for the "blue

boys," indignation for the grey, never once thinking of the hearts that loved them too. But my thoughts soon came back to myself; for just as I jumped from the first board of the fence where we had been standing, my dress, my pretty white dress, was caught and badly torn. What would my mother say! I ran across the street, sat upon the porch step and wept bitterly. My little friends gathered around me. "Why, Annie, what is the matter? Torn your dress? It is too bad, but I would not cry. Because you know," said a little philosopher, "crying will not mend it!"

"Oh, I guess she's afraid her ma will whip her!" said Clara Arnold.

From any one else I would have taken this remark patiently, but from her it was too much. I forgot that we were both guests; forgot everything except that she was the hatefulest girl in the world, and raising my head, was about to give her an answer as impolite as it was

wrong, when Mrs. Seagrave came upon the scene.

"Why, what is this!" she asked.

"Annie Fleming has torn her dress badly," said Lel.

"Oh, that is nothing; come in, Annie, and I will mend it for you."

So in I went, thinking that if it wasn't anything to Mrs. Seagrave, it was to me. But she cheered me up by saying it was a beautiful rent, and saying she would mend it so it would never be noticed. She then lent me a high-necked apron of Lel's until she could have the dress ready. Returning to the lawn I found the girls standing in a group. Lel held the bandage in her hand. As I drew near she asked: "Will you be the 'island' this time Annie? I have been it twice, and have been caught again. Do, Annie, you have not been caught at all."

I consented, and the bandage was tied over my eyes. There was a rush of feet as each one took her place, then "floating

island" was called out, and all stood still. I caught two or three but did not guess rightly—at least so they told me. Then I groped about for a long time, and came very near running into several trees but could catch no one.

"Why don't you tell me when I am too near a tree, girls," I asked, after hitting my knuckle very hard against one. No answer. "I do believe you are moving, for I know I have been all over this side of the lawn." The words had hardly passed my lips when I ran against a tree, hitting my forehead and nose so hard that I at first thought my head was split. Partially stunned by the blow, I sank down on the grass; still no sound. Thinking this a little strange, I took off the bandage, looked around but not a girl was to be seen. Too much hurt to feel angry, I rose and went round to the kitchen door. The house-maid was sitting there, reading; she looked up as I entered, said good afternoon, and was about to return to her

reading when she noticed the paleness of my face.

"Are you sick, Annie?" she asked.

"No, ma'am, I feel a little faint, so I came in for a glass of water, I have hurt my forehead, and I guess that is why I feel so queer."

I drank the water and felt a strange pressure across my forehead for a moment, and then a drop of blood fell upon the apron.

"Is your nose bleeding?" asked the maid.

"I am very glad, for you will feel better for it."

She then let some water run into the hand-basin, and placed it in my lap. For a long time I sat there while the bright drops still dripped, dripped, changing the clear water to a deep red. At length it ceased; and, after washing my face, I asked if she had seen Lel and the other girls lately.

Being told that they passed the window some time before, I went towards the or-

chard, and looked into the stable—nothing was to be seen but the horse. I was about to close the door when I heard Laura Fallon's clear laugh from above. Ascending the hay-loft stairs, I opened the door, and there they were playing "hide the handkerchief." For the first time the thought that they had come up here to get rid of me, darted into my mind. The thought was a little humiliating, so I said nothing.

"Well!" said Lel, with a constrained laugh, "I see you have found us at last."

"Did you expect me to find you with my eyes bandaged?"

Without answering my question, Lel rose and led the way down stairs. Having reached the barn-door she said:

"Now the one that reaches the mound last, has got to be it."

All started to run but me for I was really vexed.

"You take it very easy, Miss Fleming; but you may just be blinder again."

"I will not blind again!" I said angrily.

"You've got to, Annie Fleming. It's only fair; you're a cheat if you don't," said Lel.

"It takes a cheat to know a cheat," I said sharply.

"Ah, ha! Miss Impudence;" said Lel half to herself, half to the girls.

"I shouldn't think you would like her," said Clara Arnold.

"I do wish she would go home," said Lel; but she did not intend it for my ear. Then she said in a louder tone, "I'm getting tired of her."

The blood rushed to my cheeks, and tears to my eyes, as I turned my head away, for we were all sitting on the mound — I a little way from the rest. Laura Fallon moved towards me.

"I have a new book, Annie — a splendid one — I think you would like to read it; so if I may come and see you to-morrow afternoon, I will bring it." She was

a gentle, sensitive girl, was Laura, or she never could have soothed my hurt feelings so delicately.

I understood her, and answered, despite that choking in my throat, "Thank you."

But my feelings were very much hurt. Lel had desired that I should go home, and I would. As I rose to leave the group I said :

"I guess my dress is mended now, so I will get it. I have a headache, Lel, and you need not wait play for me."

I then went into the parlor where Mrs. Seagrave was sitting, and found my dress mended so neatly, that it was some time before I could find the rent. Having thanked her I left the room and passed from the house by a side door. There was a gate leading from their orchard to ours, so Lel did not see me as I left.

It was French leave, I know, which in this country means not a very polite one; but I felt that circumstances justified me.

Having entered my father's orchard, I went directly to a little arbor at the edge of the garden, where I threw myself on my knees and wept bitterly. There was little anger in my heart, only a very painful sense of humiliation, and the determination never to go to Mr. Seagrave's again; if Lel came over to see me, I would not be proud and silly, but just tell her ladyship that I had no wish for her company. I am writing just as I felt at the time. It was, no doubt, a wicked feeling, but I did not stop to moralize about it then; I only cried and cried until I fell asleep.

I was roused by my father's voice, calling my name. He was so near that my sleepy "yes, papa," was plainly heard. In a moment, he stood in the entrance, looking sharply at me as I half-knelt, half-sat, with my head resting upon the russet seat, and my eyes which had the aching, sandy feeling caused by crying, opening and closing sleepily.

"Have you been sleeping, Annie?" he asked.

"Yes, papa."

"And crying too?"

"I have been crying some," I said closing my eyes, to keep back fresh tears.

"What is the matter? Wouldn't your mamma let you go to Lel's party?"

"I have been there; but I shall not care to go there again," I said, rising.

Father saw that something was the matter; so dropping the subject, he said he was going down the river and would take me along, if I wished to go. There was nothing I liked so well; and after getting a shawl as a protection against the night air, we started. I loved my papa very dearly—that is not strange, some little girl says—perhaps not, but I loved him all the same. Of all the men I knew, there was not one I thought so good. My childish troubles were confided to him rather than to my mother; in fact, he seemed the one being on earth that I

could not live without. I was getting too big to take his hand, but I never became so grown up that I did not feel proud and two inches taller whenever I walked by his side.

Lel and her party were taking their tea on the lawn. Papa noticed this, and as we should have to pass right by them he asked if I wanted to take the other side of the road. Much relieved, I said yes. The nearest way was by a winding path down the side of the bank, at the top of which we stood to see the soldiers off. We then crossed the railroad and sandy beach, to where the boat lay. Here papa left me for a little while to see if the boat was engaged.

As we expected, it was not; and in a few moments we were floating down the river. All my afternoon griefs were forgotten in this pleasure, which I loved better than any other.

"Where are you going?" I asked; "I wish it was down to Long Island."

"I'm sorry that I cannot gratify you; but we must take an earlier start when we go there," said papa, smiling.

"Well, where are you going?"

"To Mr. Loring's with some eggs and chickens. You need not look so blank, however; for we need not be home until nine, or even later."

This assurance satisfied me, and we then floated contentedly on. Down, down, with the sky above, the green hills on one side, and meadows on the other. How smoothly the water ran here; yet, only a little way above, it dashed foamingly over the granite rocks forming the "falls."

By-and-by the stars began to appear, and the moon, too. Leaning over the boat I could see them reflected in the quiet water. I had just been telling papa of the soldier-sight and my misfortune. "But," I added, "Mrs. Seagrave mended it so nicely that mamma will not be angry."

Papa made no answer for awhile, but turned the boat and fixed the sail, for

the wind was now favorable; he then spoke:

“Why did you leave so soon? I hope you did not quarrel?”

For an answer, I related the story of the afternoon. As I told it my angry feelings all came back, and were vented in hasty words. “You see, papa,” I concluded, “that I did not quarrel; I only did what she wished me to do when I came away.”

“I am not so sure of that,” said papa; “I think Lel was angry, and did not mean all she said any more than you mean half of what you said just now.”

“I did mean it every word,” I said angrily. “Oh, papa, it is nice enough for you to talk; but what if Mr. Seagrave should invite you over to his house, and while you and the rest of his friends were at table, should say he did wish you would go home. How should you feel about it?”

“My dear little girl, I should think he had drank too much wine,” he said gravely. “Now, listen to me, Annie; I know Lel

slighted you. She knew it herself ; it was wrong, and the knowledge made her angry first with herself and then with you."

"Annie," said papa, just before entering the house, "if Lel comes to you with an apology, you will not be so unchristian as not to forgive her?"

"When she makes an apology, papa, the moon will fall ; but if she can do so I will excuse her."

Yet when I retired to rest that night, my mind was quite at ease. The talk with papa, the silent influence of the night, and my love for Lel, had all combined to drive away my anger. I had forgiven her.

And now you have heard the story of Lel's party, but you want to know if Lel and I were ever reconciled : yes, indeed, and she was one of my best loved friends. The "making up" took place nearly two weeks after the party. I was in the orchard reading, when a voice said : "Hullo, Annie!"

It was Lel ; and for a moment I quite

forgot my dignity, giving her a broad smile of welcome.

"Come over and swing, Annie," she said, in a coaxing tone.

"I can't, I'm reading," I said briefly, — for I had got back my dignity by that time.

"Pooh, never mind your book, — you don't like it better than you do me, do you?"

I certainly did not, but I said: "My books are always agreeable, — you are not always so."

I was sitting on the grass — Lel knelt beside me — "Nan, you're* angry with me!"

"No, not now."

"Oh, Nan, don't begin to talk big! You are angry with me, and I know it; and you know it, too; and I don't blame you a bit. I'm so ashamed, Nannie, of how I treated you; and although I don't mean to leave the blame upon any one but myself, still I would never have run away

from you if Clara Arnold had not suggested it. I was so sorry when I saw that ugly lump on your forehead, and so mad with myself that I had to be spiteful to some one; so I was spiteful to you. I have told mamma all about it, and she said I ought to beg your pardon; and I do, Nan, dear. Say, Nannie, why don't you speak?"

Still I did not speak; my head was turned away so that Lel could not see my face. I was so surprised, and yet so glad, for the time was very heavy without her company.

"I never would have believed it of you, Annie Fleming," said Lel, springing to her feet; for she thought I was unwilling to forgive her. She was walking rapidly away when I looked up.

"Lel!" I cried, "Oh, Lel! do come back!"

"What!" she exclaimed, and fixing her dark eyes upon my face, while a few tears rested upon her flushed cheeks.

“I do forgive you, Lel ; I did then, only I could not say it.”

“We are two little goosie-poosies,” said Lel ; and then, girl-like, we sealed our making up with kisses.





A DARK DAY.

FIDELIA! Fidelia! faithful and true! dear little, sweet little girl, open your bright eyes! Wake up! wake up!" mamma exclaimed, poetically, to her little girl, one sunny morning, kissing her sleepy eyes and dewy lips with every word. "Wake up! my little one; the birds have had their breakfast, and cleared away the things hours ago. Come! curly-head, come!" And so Fidelia opened her blue eyes, and rolled into dear mamma's arms, and lay there, a tangled mass of blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and golden hair, and a limp suggestion of plump, dimpled hands and

feet, of rounded shoulders, and the merriest little heart in all the world, until mamma had arrayed her almost as sweetly as the roses and lilies of the field, when she was set down in a pair of tiny shoes, very brown at the toes, and left to roll and tumble in her own fashion, in the house and out of it, while mamma prepared the breakfast.

But little did dear mamma, so serenely joyous, dream in what clouds and darkness that sunny day would set ; what shadows would lie across the path of her heart's delight, and all, because of the same sweetly stammering, innocently roguish chip of femininity. Who would think trouble could come from this Fidelia, so jolly and good ? The best little girl that ever breathed, as everybody knew. But so it was to be, and Fidelia who was never a moment quiet, unless she was asleep, slipped down from mamma's lap, and trotted about, good, obedient, and happy, through the bright hours ; tumbled a dozen times over the one flower-bed, hid in the long grass, had two weighty

misunderstandings with chubby, stubborn Ben, quickly made up, however, through the mild intervention of serious-minded Josie, who positively refused to manœuvre troops who fell out among themselves, and so on and on, for hours and hours, within sight and hearing of mamma. But, as it happened, Fidelia was a restless little lady, and strange as it may seem, she grew tired, as the day wore on, of the garden, flowers, and grass, the boy's balls, and her own dolly (a beautifully original one; no fussy mixture of wax and whalebone, but a limp and lovely creature that could be bumped against the wall, or rocked for half an hour at a time, without the slightest contraction of her muscles, or change of countenance; rivalling the description given of Tallyrand, that, had he been stabbed in the back, his face would have given no intimation of it; mamma made it, and it wore a canary-colored dress); and took longing looks through the bars of the fence papa had himself put up

around his own dominions, at the world, the beautiful, bright world, beyond ; never dreaming that the round little face, scarce two feet from the ground, fanned by tumbled rings of golden hair, and shadowed by a pink sun-bonnet, much twisted and also tumbled, made, as it pressed itself close to the fence, and peeped through with eager blue eyes, something about as pretty, and a great deal more lovable, than that upon which it gazed. So she looked and longed, longed and looked ; behind her was the one-storied house, with its weather-browed walls ; its open window, with the honeysuckle-vine, where the humming birds came every day ; and, behind that, the little yard where Josie marched and countermarched his troops, where Bennie played ball, and dolly was taken out to tea — this behind, while before her — ah ! before her what a boundless world ! “Fields on fields of ripening grain ;” far blue hills, from the tops of which, standing on tiptoe, she might, perhaps, touch the

sky ; grand old trees ; and, joy of joys ! playing around their old roots, darting across the meadow was the gurgling brook, with the brightest bubbles, the loveliest pebbles, brown, gray, white and speckled, like eggs in a nest, Fidelia knew, for she had seen them on sunny holidays when papa was not at work, and had sat with mamma under the trees, while the children splashed in the cool, rippling water ; the gay little brook, the great old ocean's youngest, dearest child, playing at will in the wild woods, or running down to watch the reapers in the fields. Fidelia might watch the reapers, too, but only from afar, and through the prison bars of papa's new fence. Ah, me ! my beauty ! my own Fidelia ! may I never again see those blue eyes gazing out upon the world with such a look as when, fully mindful of your promise to dear mamma and her repeated command never to go beyond that garden fence without her permission, your brown little hand slipped the gate-latch, and your

good angel hung his head for shame, as the pink sun-bonnet fluttered over the white daisies and the tiny shoes, very brown at the toes, pushed aside the long grass. The birds sang, the brook carolled (all to itself), the sun went on shining just the same, while Fidelia ; Oh, Fidelia ! she picked the tallest daisies, blew away the downiest dandelions, curled their long stems, chased a yellow butterfly, and all but caught a bright-eyed blue bird, perched on a twig with his head cocked knowingly on one side ; she reached the brook, and dug out shining pebbles, round and white ; she saw a squirrel run up a tree, at the foot of which, in a little hollow, lay the broken shells of the very nuts on which he had fed his family last winter ; a bee buzzed past, and almost mistook her glowing cheek for a red pine rose ; she saw the reapers in the fields, but the blue hills and the sky she could not reach ; and, oh ! when her feet grew tired, and the daisies were no longer pretty, she looked in vain

for the weather-browed walls, the honey-suckled window, the home she had left. Then a terrible weight of woe oppressed the young heart ; a double load of misery. The feeling that she had done wrong had never left her, and now she had lost her way besides ! The red lips quivered and the blue eyes dimmed ; the birds sang all the same, the brook carolled its own heartless measure, the sun went on shining, the sickles went on glancing like silver through the golden grain. Nobody minded, Fidelia was lost, and nobody cared. Dolly — patient, amiable dolly — was lying head downwards, spread out upon the door-sill ; Joe and Ben were building forts in the backyard ; mamma was sewing, all just the same, and at the thought, Fidelia's sobs grew louder, her cries more and more piteous, and she thought, if only once she could hear the click of the gate closing behind her, dolly should never more lie forsaken on the door-sill ; never, never,

would she disobey mamma ; never tell an untruth again.

“Oh, mamma!” she cried out loud ; “oh ! mamma, come ! Take me home, mamma, mamma ! I will never do so again.”

“Are you very sure of that, my little girl ?” said a voice near her.

And Fidelia, looking all around, could not tell where it came from, until she saw one little violet, the last of the year’s, lingering long behind the others, on which stood the loveliest little lady you ever saw. So small, you can’t think, in violet and gold, with a wand and a crown, and a train, and long, wavy hair, down to her feet, who said over again : “Are you very sure of that, my little girl ?”

“Oh ! yes, indeed, I am,” said Fidelia ; “if I could only see my mamma.”

“Your mamma told you not to come,” said the lady.

“Yes,” assented Fidelia, crying again.

“And you said you would not, and so you have disobeyed your mamma, and told

a story," the lady (who, of course, was the Fairy Godmamma) continued. "Now, it is very dishonorable to do such things, and nobody will ever trust you, or believe in you again when they find you act so; but I see you are very sorry, and are punished enough, so now if you promise me never to disobey again, I will show you the way home. Will you promise?"

Fidelia promised faithfully, and then the lady said —

"I am quite ashamed to be seen with a disobedient little girl, so I will not go with you. There's the house; go straight to it. Do you see?" And sure enough, there was the house, honeysuckle and all, and Fidelia was not slow in turning towards it, crying, because she was tired and lonely and frightened. But, when she was up to the very fence, she forgot her troubles, lingering to pull off the daisy-heads, just as if nothing had happened, instead of running in at once to tell mamma all she had done, and there she was, playing by the

roadside, when mamma, looking out of the window, caught sight of the pink sun-bonnet, now more tumbled than ever.

"Why, Fidelia," cried mamma, "where have you been all this time?" I have been calling and calling you."

"Only here, mamma," the child answered. "Only just, right here."

Mamma then told her to come in the yard, saying nothing more.

Then Fidelia came in and played round the yard, made several calls with dolly, built a house of chips for her to live in, and got in the way of Ben and Josie, who were busy with a kite, which only went up on purpose to fall down again.

There were great clouds in the sky, the air grew very chilly, and Fidelia sat in a corner with her dolly very silent, with a sense of something strange and solemn all around her, until mamma came to the door and called them in because it was going to rain.

Ben and Josie ran to help make a fire,

then sat on the hearth, watching the blaze come up, while mamma, having filled the tea-kettle, rocked the baby, the room growing darker and darker, and the wind beating against the windows.

"I wish it was 'Tristmas," said Ben to Josie.

"Why?" said Josie.

"Because it would be so jolly and cold," replied Ben, energetically.

And then they told each other stories about last Christmas. The words, however, coming less and less rapidly, and more and more faintly, for Fidelia sat silent in a dark corner, while mamma rocked and rocked, saying never a word, though this was the hour when they always had her to themselves; when she would take two on her lap, and the other two would squeeze into the same chair with her, she telling them stories, and talking with them "about everything," as Josie told papa. Now the steam rushed out from the tea-kettle, the rain beat against the windows, the thunder

shook the house, and the lightning rushed like a knife on fire into the room. The boys drew up to Fidelia's corner, frightened at mamma's silence, speechless themselves, weighed down by such a feeling of loneliness and desolation ; so awed and terrified that when Ben, unable to endure it, suddenly burst out into wild sobs, the others instantly followed by a wail, which, of course, woke the baby, who looked around in wonder, and seemed to partake, in a measure, of the general terror ; but mamma quieted them almost at once, calling them to come to her, putting her arms around them when they were close enough, but still strangely quiet, looking at the fire.

"Oh ! mamma," sobbed Joe, "it is awful."

"What, Josie, dear ? You are not afraid of the storm ? You know that God has hold of it, and will not let it hurt you."

"I don't think it is the storm," said Joe.

"Won't you talk to us, mamma !" Ben begged, with tears.

“Mamma feels very sad to-night,” said she then. “One of her children has grieved her to-day, and she cannot be happy.”

“Is it me, mamma?” Joe asked, all aghast. “I did not want to hold baby that time, because me and Bennie were making the kite.”

“I know you did not, little Josie,” mamma answered, kissing him, for his lips were quivering; “but you came and did it. You know I was sorry to call you away, but I could not have got the dinner if you had not come. You did not disobey me; I hope you never will.”

“It wasn’t me,” Ben declared. “I h’ain’t done nothing as you didn’t tell me.”

“But who pulled the kite out of Josie’s hands?” Ben choked up, and entered no defence. “He stopped right off,” said Joe.

“Yes, Bennie dear; you were sorry in a minute, and made up with Josie.”

Then she asked Fidelia, whose heart was full by this time, and was hanging her head

behind mamma's chair, what she had done wrong to-day.

Oh ! how hard Fidelia cried then, coming round a little and hiding her head in mamma's lap in spite of the baby, sobbing out all the day's wrong and misery ! How she had broken her word, and disobeyed, and then denied it.

"But, oh ! mamma," cried Fidelia, "I did not have a good time any more all day ; dolly looked cross at me, and I was 'shamed to speak to any one ; and the lady out in the field said no one would ever trust me again. Will you ever love me any more, mamma ?" she asked.

And then mamma explained how the lady had told her what people in the world think of a dishonorable person, but that there was something a thousand times worse even than that : to displease and grieve the good God ; how, when we do wrong, we make our good angel, who comes down from heaven to stay with us day and night, cover up his face for sorrow ; and

how we can never be happy when we are hiding something wrong in our hearts. Then she told them how beautiful this good angel was, always with a bright smile on his face, never afraid in a storm or in the dark, because nothing could hurt him, who never in all his life had done the least thing to hide or be ashamed of.

And then they all wished they might never say a word or do a thing they would not like him to know, which pleased mamma very much. And then when she had talked to them "about everything," as usual, all of a sudden the room was light again; the rain was over, and the sky was all bright in the west, where the sun had gone down to shine and make the trees grow for some other people while it was night here.

Papa was coming across the fields, shouting to them to see who would meet him first.

Of course, it was Joe, who was the biggest. But papa snatched up Fidelia, and carried her on his shoulders, and she was

the first to guess what he had in his pocket — three yellow peaches, no less, one for each.

“But I have been bad to-day,” whispered Fidelia, the tears returning.

At which papa looked grave and sad, until the boys assured him she meant never to do so again.

When all was right once more, mamma had tea ready, the room was lighted up, papa was “awful good,” as Ben said, making funny shadows on the wall, till bedtime, when the children went happy to bed, not a bit afraid of the dark, knowing who sat beside them, and watched them while they slept.

And ever afterwards when Fidelia was tempted to do wrong, or to conceal what she had done, the memory of that Dark Day would come to her, and strengthen her to do the right, and speak the honest, open truth.



ROBIN REDBREAST.

MANY years ago, before the oaks that furnished the timber for the construction of the oldest ships that lie in the harbor of Brest were little acorns, there lived in the parish of Guirek, a poor widow named Ninorc'h Madek. She was the descendant of a noble and wealthy family, and her father, at his death, left to his children considerable property, consisting of a manor house, farm, mill, lime-kiln, twelve horses and twice as many oxen, twelve cows and ten times that number of sheep, together with a large store of wheat and flax.

But the brothers of Ninorc'h knowing that she was too gentle, even if she were not too powerless, to punish their injustice, resolved to exclude her from any share in the inheritance, and divide the whole among themselves. Perrik, the oldest, took the house, the farm, and the horses; Fanche, the second brother, the mill and the cows; while the youngest, Riwal, had for his portion, the oxen, the sheep, and the lime-kiln; all they gave their widowed sister was a hut, or stable, without doors or windows, which had been built on a piece of waste land, as a place of shelter for sick cattle.

While Ninorc'h was engaged in removing to her new habitation some articles of household furniture that had been given to her by her husband, Fanche, with a semblance of pity for her forlorn condition, said:

“My sister, I wish to act towards you as a brother and a Christian should. I have a black cow that is not much good;

she does not nor never has given milk enough to feed a new-born infant. You may take her; and Snowdrop can take care of her every day, while she grazes on the heath." Snowdrop was the widow's only child, a girl of about eleven years, whose complexion was so fair, and form so fragile, that she was commonly called by the name of the delicate blossom of early springtime.

Ninorc'h accepted the pitiful gift, and took her way to her humble abode, accompanied by her little girl, who led by an old cord fastened round her horns, an emaciated cow. Henceforth, Snowdrop and Blackie, as the poor animal was called on account of her color, were constant companions. Every morning they went together to the heath, where the cow endeavored to find some grass among the pebbles; and the child occupied herself in making crosses of daisies and other wild flowers, and in repeat-

ing aloud her prayers to the Blessed Virgin.*

One day, while singing a hymn she had heard in the church of Guirek, she saw a little bird perch on one of the flowery crosses she had planted in the ground. Soon he commenced to sing, at the same time looking at Snowdrop and moving his head as if he would like to speak to her. The little girl approached him softly, and listened attentively, but could not distinguish a single word. In vain the bird whistled louder, clapped his wings and flew around her head; she could not understand him, yet she was so pleased to see and listen to him that she forgot everything else, and the sun set without her being aware of it. At last the bird flew away, and when she raised her eyes to see where he was going she perceived, for the first time, that the stars were in the sky.

* Throughout Brittany it is not unusual to see long ranges of these flowery crosses beside the ditches: they are made of the heath blossoms and daisies, arranged on a frame formed from some thorny shrub.

Rising from the spot where she had been so long sitting, she ran to seek Blackie, but could not find her. Snowdrop called as loud as her voice would permit; she searched every spot in which the cow would be likely to be found, but it was in vain. At last she heard her mother's voice calling her name, and knew by the tone that something dreadful had occurred. She ran as fast as she could in the direction from which the voice came; and near the entrance to the heath, on the path that led to their dwelling, she saw her mother standing, and at her feet some horns and bones,—all that remained of poor Blackie, the wolves having killed and devoured her.

When Snowdrop comprehended what had taken place she almost fainted; then throwing herself on her knees, she wept bitterly for the sad fate of the dumb companion she had learned to love so dearly, and repeated often:

“Oh! My dearest Mother Mary! Why did you not let me see that cruel wolf. I

would have made the sign of the cross with my crook, and he would have been obliged to fly. I would have repeated the lines they teach the little shepherds that watch the flocks on the mountains :

“‘Depart in the name of St. Herve, if you are a wolf : *
Depart in the name of the true God, if you are Satan.’”

The widow, who was a very pious woman, seeing the grief of her daughter, sought to console her by saying :

“You must not, my child, grieve for Blackie as you would for a human being ; even if the wolves and bad Christians are against us, God will help us to support our injuries. Come, help me to collect some fire-wood, and carry it home.”

Snowdrop did as her mother desired ; but at every step she took she uttered big sighs, and the tears almost blinded her.

* This form of exorcism, evidently originated in a circumstance in the life of St. Herve, who obliged a wolf that had devoured an ass belonging to his uncle Wlphroedus, to assume the place and perform the duties of the animal he killed. The wolf lived for many years as a domestic animal under the same roof as the sheep, without attempting to injure them. A miracle of the same kind is related in the life of St. Malo.

“Poor Blackie,” she repeated constantly. “Poor Blackie, that was so easy to take care of and always so glad to see me, that would eat anything she could find, and was even beginning to grow fat !”

Snowdrop's heart was so full of sorrow that she could eat no supper, and though she went to bed it was only to dream of Blackie, and wake up imagining that she heard the poor animal lowing at the door. At last, unable to remain in one place longer, she rose before it was quite light, and ran barefooted, and in her night clothes as she was, to the heath.

Perceiving the little bird again perched on the daisy cross, she approached and observed anew that while he chirped he seemed to call her. Unfortunately she found it as difficult to understand him as the day previous ; and she was turning away, somewhat annoyed, when she thought she saw a piece of gold shining on the ground. She tried to turn it over with her foot, but it was the golden herb, and

hardly had she touched it than she heard distinctly the words of the bird, who said in his chirping :

“Snowdrop, I am your friend ; Snowdrop, listen to me.”

“Who are you ?” asked Snowdrop, in astonishment.

“I am Robin Redbreast,” replied the bird. “On the day when Christ suffered on Calvary, I followed him during his painful journey, and broke one of the thorns from the crown that encircled his Sacred Head. In recompense for this service, I have been permitted to live till the Day of Judgment, and to enrich a poor girl every year. This year you are the one I have chosen.” *

“Is it possible you have chosen me, Robin Redbreast ?” cried Snowdrop, full of joy : “then I can have a silver cross and some new wooden shoes.”

“You shall have a golden cross, and

* There is a tradition in Brittany that the Redbreast broke one of the thorns from the crown that encircled our Saviour’s head.

shall wear silken shoes, as becomes a young lady of noble ancestry," replied Robin.

"And what must I do to obtain all this, my good little friend?"

"You must follow where I shall lead you."

Snowdrop replied that she would be delighted to do that, and commenced to run in the same direction in which the bird flew.

He led her across the heath, then through a copse of underwood, then through fields of rye, and on arriving at the cliffs on the coast, opposite the Seven Islands, he stopped and said:

"Do you see anything on the sand below?"

"Yes," replied Snowdrop; "I see a pair of shoes made of beechwood, that have never been near a fire, and a staff of holly-wood that has never been touched by a knife."

"Put on the shoes and take up the staff."

"It is done."

"Now you can walk on the sea to the nearest island, of which you will make the tour ; then you will find a rock on which rushes, the color of the sea, grow."

"After that?"

"You will gather the rushes, and make a rope of them."

"It shall be done."

"Then you will strike the rock with your holly-wood staff, and a cow will come out, which you will secure with your rope of rushes, and lead to your mother, to console her for the loss of Blackie."

Snowdrop did all that Robin Redbreast desired her to do ; she walked across the sea, she made the rope of rushes, she struck the rock, and immediately a cow, with a skin as smooth as satin, and an eye as soft as a gazelle's, came out. Snowdrop brought her home, and her mother now rejoiced as much as she had previously lamented.

But judge of their astonishment when Mor-Vyoc'h (that was the name Robin

Redbreast gave the animal, and means Sea Cow), came to be milked, the milk flowed under their fingers, without stopping, like water out of a fountain.

Ninorc'h filled all the earthen vessels she possessed, then her churns and tubs, but still the milk flowed on.

“May the blessing of God be about us!” cried the widow; “but I believe the beast must have drunk of the waters of Languengar.”

And really there seemed to be nothing to stop the milk of Mor-Vyoc'h: she supplied sufficient for the entire parish. Soon, throughout the country, nothing was talked of but the widow's cow, and people came from all directions to see her. The good pastor of Peros-Guirek came along with the rest, to see if it was not a snare of the spirit of evil; but, after having placed his stole on the head of Mor-Vyoc'h, he declared they had nothing to fear from her.

Many of the richest farmers wished

to purchase Ninorc'h's cow, and each endeavored to out-bid the other. At last Perrik came, and being as anxious to get the animal as any of the rest, he said :

“If you are a Christian you will not forget that I am your brother, and, in consequence, you will give me the preference in this bargain. Let me take Mor-Vyoc'h, and I will give you in exchange nine of my cows.”

The widow replied :

“Mor-Voyc'h is worth more than any nine cows, she is worth more than all the cows in the country ; with her I can supply with milk all the markets in the diocese of Treguler, and of Cornouaille, from Dinan to Carhaix.”

“Well, my sister,” replied Perrik, “give her to me, and I will give you in return the farm of our father, on which you were born, and all that is on it, both cows and horses.”

Ninorc'h accepted this proposition, and

after going to the farm, turning over some earth in the fields, drinking some water from the wells, making a fire on the heath, and cutting some hairs from the horses' tails, to prove that she had become mistress of all these things, she gave Mor-Vyoc'h to Perrik, who carried her with him, to a house which he possessed near the coast of Menez-Brée. Snowdrop wept bitterly when she saw the cow go away ; but when night came, she went into the barn to see that everything was right, and while she filled the mangers with hay, she repeated often :

“Alas ! why is Mor-Vyoc'h not here ?”
When shall I see my dear Mor-Vyoc'h again ?”

Just as she finished her task, the little girl heard a lowing at her back, and, as in stepping on the golden herb, she had been enabled to understand the language of all the animals, this lowing said :

“Here I am back again to you, my mistress.”

Snowdrop turned round astonished, and beheld Mor-Vyoc'h.

"Is it possible?" she cried, "and who brought you to us?"

"I could not belong to your uncle Perrik," answered Mor-Vyoc'h; "my nature will not allow me to remain with any one that is in the state of mortal sin, so I have come back to belong to you again."

"Then my mother will be obliged to return the farm, and all my uncle gave her for you."

"Oh, no, not at all, for all that was taken unjustly, by her brother."

"But he will come here to look for you, and will find you."

"Go out then, and pull three leaves of vervain, and I will tell you when you come back what to do with them."

Snowdrop did as requested, and soon returned with the three leaves.

"Now," said Mor-Vyoc'h, "pass the three leaves over my back, from my horns to my tail, and say, in a low voice, three

times : St. Ronan of Hibernia ! St. Ronan of Hibernia ! St. Ronan of Hibernia ! ” *

Snowdrop did so ; and at the third mention of the Saint's name, the cow changed into a beautiful horse.

The little girl stood motionless with astonishment.

“ Now,” said the animal, “ your uncle Perrik cannot recognize me, and henceforth, I shall be called Marc'h-Mor (Horse of the Sea) instead of Mor-Vyoc'h.”

On learning what had taken place, the widow was greatly rejoiced ; and, as she had some wheat to send to Tréguier the next day, she resolved then to use her new horse. But judge of her admiration, when she perceived that the back of Marc'h-Mor increased in length, in proportion to the burden with which he was

* This appeal to St. Ronan is explained, according to Albert de Morlaix, by the fact that the Saint was on one occasion accused of being a sorcerer and a necromancer. Though, in spite of the common belief of the time, he was able to prove his innocence of the charge, the opinion that St. Ronan had the power of changing the forms of animals was prevalent among the Breton peasantry, and he is still regarded by them, as the patron of transformations.

charged, so that he could carry as many sacks at one time as all the other horses in the parish.

The fame of this wonderful horse spread on all sides, and Fanche, among many others, came to the farm to see it, and was so delighted with it, that he begged his sister to sell it to him ; but she would not listen to his proposal until he offered her in exchange all his cows and his mill, with all the pigs that he fattened there.

The bargain having been concluded, Ninorc'h went to take possession of her new property, as she had taken the farm, and Fanche departed with Marc'h-Mor.

In the evening, as Snowdrop expected, the horse returned, and, as before, she collected three leaves of vervain, and passed them over the animal's back, from the ears to the tail, repeating three times : "St. Ronan of Hibernia !"

And immediately the horse changed into a sheep, with wool so long that it reached to the ground, as fine as the finest thread

of flax, and as red as scarlet. Marc'h-Mor now became Mor-Vawd, or the Sea Sheep.*

The widow admired anew this wonderful transformation, and said to her daughter :

“Bring me the large shears, that I may remove some of this fleece, which is too heavy for the animal to carry.”

But the more she cut the wool, the faster it seemed to grow, and, in consequence, the value of the sheep was greater than of all the herds in the country.

Riwal, happening to arrive at this time, was a witness of the wonder, and gave his sister his lime-kiln, his heaths and all the sheep he owned, in order that he might possess Mor-Vawd.

Every thing having been completed, and the new accession to the widow's property having been formally taken possession of, Riwal departed with his sheep; but as soon as they reached the coast, Mor-Vawd sprang into the sea, swam to the smallest of the Seven Islands, where the rocks open-

* Mor-Vawd means literally Sea Calf.

ing to receive her, she disappeared forever from his sight.

Snowdrop waited in vain for the return of the sheep; she came not that evening, nor the next day.

Sad and disappointed, the little girl ran to the heath, and found there her friend, the Redbreast, who said to her :

“I was waiting for you to come, Snowdrop, that I might tell you that Mor-Vawd has gone away, never to return. Your uncles have been punished through their own sins. You are now the heiress to sufficient wealth to be entitled to wear a golden cross and silken shoes, as I promised you should. My task is finished, and I must fly far away; but before I go, I wish to make one request of you. That you will always remember that you were once very poor, and that the Almighty sent a little bird to make you rich.”

Snowdrop promised to remember it always, and, as a mark of her gratitude to Heaven for her prosperity, she had a chapel

built on the spot where Robin Redbreast had first spoken to her, and after living many years in holiness and usefulness, died in peace with God and men.





GERTIE'S PLAN.

QLD Solomon Scrooge was the “Bug-aboo” of the whole juvenile neighborhood. He lived entirely alone, in a little unpainted house, making and mending shoes, and caring little how the world went, or what it thought of him, while at the same time, every little child in the town was ready to tremble at the bare mention of his name, or, as soon as night fell, to shrink under the bedclothes and cover up their heads, not daring to peep out lest they should see his goggles glaring at them in the dark, or his grizzly head surmounted by its ominous-looking nightcap, nodding vengeance at them.

However, there was one little girl, Gertie Fair, who viewed the old shoemaker through the eyes of a more partial mind. She often, with her finger to her lip, peeped from behind the curtains as he passed, and searched in vain for the big carving knife, and the long, black bag which rumor had added to his outfit, and listened with mouse-like stillness for the shrieks and groans which were reputed to proceed from beneath the great woolly coat he wore; and, at last, failing to discover any of those signs which, according to her idea, must necessarily belong to a professional kidnapper, she ventured so far one morning as to stand on the doorstep when he passed and throw crumbs to a little bobolink that perched at his feet. Old Scrooge stared at her through his blue goggles, and Gertie returned the stare without a tremble.

When he passed, she smoothed down her apron and glanced around to see if there were any witnesses of her daring

courage. At that moment a boy came creeping stealthily along from his hiding-place, and taking up a rock hurled it, coward-like, after old Scrooge, and then disappeared. Gertie gave one look at the shoemaker as the rock hit him, and then seeing him turn around, ran terrified up the steps, but before she gained the threshold, Scrooge had her in his grasp.

"How dare you, how dare you fire stones at me, you little hussy, you?" he cried, giving her a most alarming shake; "you little mischief, you — take that, and that, and that," he added, boxing her ears until she lay on the threshold kicking and choking and breathless with terror. Conscious at last that Scrooge had gone, she recovered and again ventured down the doorsteps, arriving there just in time to see the boy who had fired the stone, tumble from a high tree which he had been climbing, and sprain his arm so badly that he was obliged to cry for help.

"Ah, ha!" said Gertie, her voice still

convulsed with the effects of crying. "That boy hurt Scrooge, and I guess God hurt him now to pay up. I guess He did ; I shan't say so, for true."

Gertie was quite alone in the house, her mother was out shopping, and her brother Jack, who was instructed to take care of his little sister, had forsaken her for a game of marbles. She sat on her high stool by the window and looked out, thinking that when she would grow smart enough to write a letter, how sorry she would make old Scrooge feel for "slapping" her ; she was sure he would cry when he read it, for she wouldn't send it to him until she was going to die, and then by the time he would get it she would be dead, and that would make him feel worst of all.

Kitty came purring up to her, but, for the first time in its whole life was not noticed by its fond little mistress. At last, it jumped into her lap, and then Gertie took its soft neck between her

hands and held its face close to her own.

"Oh, Kitty," she said, watering his whiskers with tears, "I'd like to tell you all about Scrooge; so I would, but you can't speak grammar. If you could, honest and true — black and blue, I'd rather tell you than any of the girls, for you'd believe me; you wouldn't say, like them, that I fired the rock, when I didn't, would you, Kitty?"

Kitty winked its eye and mewed.

"For, oh, Kitty, its awful to fire rocks; they might smash through somebody's window and spill some little baby out of its chair, mightn't they, Kitty. And oh, goody, there's Jack," she cried, jumping from her stool and running with Kitty in her arms to the door: "Jack, Jack."

"What is it?" said Jack, quite curious.

"I want to tell you something," said Gertie, and immediately, with many confidential gestures, she stated to her brother

the details of her late misfortune. "What would you do," she added terminating the conversation, "if you was me?"

"I'd fight him down," said Jack, "but he might change me into a monkey, and you, too, and then nobody'd ever know what became of us. That's where all the monkeys come from, you know. Scrooge catches all the little girls and boys he can grab, and sells 'em to the organ grinders; so you'd better run in the house now and wait for me; I'll be back soon, and I'll fetch you an apple, maybe."

Gertie ran into the house and locked the door, and pulled down all the blinds, and crawling under the table, sat there, expecting old Scrooge to pop out at her from every crack in the wall, and every closet in the room, in which suspense she remained until Jack's return.

When her mother came home at night, she was weary and sick, and for that reason, Gertie refrained from introducing her trouble; but an old lady who accompanied

her mother, and who slept with Gertie that night, was made her confidant.

She was a kind lady, and earnestly undertook to quiet the little girl's fears in regard to the old shoemaker.

"In the first place," she said, "you must return good for the evil done you by Mr. Scrooge."

"I guess I don't know what that means," said Gertie.

"It means," said her companion, "that God will give you a brighter crown to wear in heaven, if you will. Instead of feeling angry with the poor old shoemaker, break your tin-bank open and buy him a pair of warm winter mittens with your savings; or, if you would rather take Dolly down to him and have him make her a pair of shoes, and then you can give him the money as payment, for he is supposed to be very poor, and—why, what is the matter, child?"

"Take Dolly to see Scrooge," Gertie cried, sitting up in the bed and staring at

the old lady with a look of terror ; “don’t *you* know that he grabs little girls ?”

“ Oh, ho ! lay down, honey, lay down,” said the old lady, patting her on the cheek, and laughing in better humor than Gertie had ever known her to do before ; “ that’s all a fib, gotten up to frighten poor little innocents. Scrooge is a dear, harmless old man ; he loves good children, and he is very sorry for bad children. You could play around his feet all day and he would only bless you. Dear child, if every one was as free from evil as Scrooge, this would be a very happy world. He is far nearer heaven, and far less to be feared, than many who live in fine houses and dress in fine clothes ; for God is always with the poor, and, of course, then, He must be with Scrooge. It is very wrong and cruel in you to fear him so, for he has a bright angel for a companion, as well as you have, and he never would have punished you, only he thought you threw the rock at him, with the intention of hurting him, and I shouldn’t won-

der if he felt very sorry for giving way to anger as he did ; for, in order to please God, we should bear with a great deal before we become angry. Besides, the poor old man is lonely, and it makes him feel sad when he sees little children, to whom he would like to be kind, run away from him as if he were a monster, instead of a soul made to God's own image and likeness."

Gertie's eyes opened wide in wonder very frequently as her companion proceeded to describe the true character of Scrooge ; and, at last, quite convinced, she fell asleep with her arms around the old lady's neck.

The following morning, Solomon sat working away with his awl and end. Gertie approached as far as the door of his shop and then drew back. She came again, and again ran back ; at last she summoned up courage enough to open the door. She was shy, but not afraid.

Solomon was so absorbed in his shoe

that he did not see her at first. So Gertie stood, thinking how she would attract his attention. "I know what I'll do," she said; "I'll drop my apple and make a big noise; let me see, I guess I won't do that, my apple might fall into a shoe and get lost. Oh, what a pile of everything is laying round; oh, see the heaps of slippers hanging on the peg, and see the boots, and — and something else that's lying on the floor."

At that moment old Scrooge looked up. He started and Gertie jumped. They both viewed each other for some moments. At last, Gertie, remembering all the old lady said to her, moved nearer the cobbler, with a side-long glance, and her finger in the corner of her mouth, and said:

"Please, Mr. Scrooge, how do?"

Scrooge looked at her a moment longer, and then pulled his ends harder than ever.

Gertie waited patiently for encouragement, and receiving none, said again:

“Please, sir, Mr. Solomon Scrooge, I’ve come to — to — I guess I know somebody can make shoes.”

The cobbler coughed very loud.

“And I guess I know somebody who can throw stones at a poor, feeble old man,” said Scrooge, working very fast.

At this undeserved accusation, Gertie completely broke down. She commenced to cry.

At that moment the postman stopped and handed a letter through the window. Scrooge turned it over and over, examining the postmark and the writing full five minutes before he broke the seal. The letter proved to be from the boy who had hit him with the stone: the boy was penitent, and the note contained a very sincere apology for the wicked act.

Scrooge felt a qualm of conscience for what he had done to Gertie. He looked towards her, and for the first time saw that she wept. In a moment he was at her side wiping her eyes with the corner of his big

loose tunic, and saying all manner of consoling things to her.

It did not require much effort to restore Gertie's smiles. Her joy knew no bounds when the shoemaker told her the contents of the letter, and how sorry he was for mistaking her for the culprit.

"And now," he added, perching her up on a stool, "what can I do for you, my little miss?"

Gertie, for the first time in her life, got a good, fair look at the shoemaker, and as he knelt before her, her little heart, spite of her fortitude, began to beat very loud. However, she succeeded in replying very animatedly that it was coming cold weather, and Dolly needed a pair of new shoes. "And please, Mr. Solomon Scrooge," she added, "make Dolly a good fit."

"That I will," said the old man, producing his foot rule, and taking Dolly's measure. "She shall wear the smartest pair of boots that Solomon Scrooge can

make, and that's saying something," he added, with a look of pride.

Gertie looked at him, but said nothing. Her old fright was coming over her, for Scrooge was not at all inviting. He knelt before her, slip-shod, unkempt, and unwashed. His long, blue tunic, patched with every color of the rainbow, his beard grizzly and fierce-looking, his goggles terrible, and his nightcap! Oh, his nightcap.

When he had measured Dolly, he still knelt staring at his customer, and Gertie stared back at him, her eyes growing wider and wider, with increasing alarm. Scrooge coughed, but did not withdraw his eyes. He made a movement.

"What a good chance he's got to grab me," said Gertie.

He put his hand under his tunic.

"He's getting his knife," thought Gertie, weak with terror.

He drew forth his hand from beneath his tunic, and to Gertie's indescribable re-

lief and great astonishment, presented her with a beautiful little red rosary.

All her fears vanished, her gratitude was unbounded, her dependence upon him now was incalculable; she cried with delight, and wound her soft, little arms around his neck in real affection.

The old man, for the first time in a long, long while, felt really happy. He put his hand on Gertie's head and blest her, and his little dark shop never before looked so bright to him as when she stood there, her brown eyes brimming with love for him who hitherto had been so uncared for.

Moved by curiosity, he inquired of her how it was that she chose to come to him in preference to the other shoemakers; and Gertie, with candid innocence, confessed her intention of returning good for evil, and her plan regarding it.

He said nothing, but the next day, when Gertie called after Dolly's new shoes, which, by the way, were a "very pretty fit," he flatly refused payment for them, a

circumstance which the purchaser was reluctant to submit to and greatly disappointed at, for, according to her own statement, that spoiled everything.

However, after this incident, she became a frequent caller on old Solomon, and did him many a kind little favor. About a year afterwards, when he was dying, he sent for her, and handing her a box, which required all her strength to carry home, he told her it was for her alone, but that she mus'n't open it until her twentieth birthday.

Gertie attended his funeral, and was so grieved at his death, that her mother was alarmed for her health. Every year while she remained in the town, she planted fresh flowers over his grave.

When her twentieth birthday arrived, she opened the box with some curiosity, and there lay snugly encased, a pair of soft kid boots, each containing a purse of gold, which counted three thousand dollars in all. There was a slip of paper accompany-

ing the gift, and on it were written the words :

This is for the little girl who returned good for evil.

The gift was quite opportune, for Gertie was very poor, and suffering with anxiety as to how she was going to procure a livelihood. Her surprise and delight was beyond description, and her first expenditure of the gift was made in the purchase of a handsome tombstone for the grave of her benefactor.





MAMIE AND THE BIRD.

MAMIE ALLEN was six years old. She was a charming little girl, kind, affectionate and obedient; but these good qualities were marred by a very serious fault. She had a fiery temper, which she took no pains to control. On the least contradiction her face would become scarlet with rage, her eyes flashed fire, she would grind her teeth, stamp her feet, and strike all who came within her reach.

On her birthday her father had given her a pretty little canary bird, which she called Robie. She was very fond of him and gave him the greatest care. Every

morning after having completed her toilet, said her prayers, and kissed her parents, she would run to see Robie, clean out his cage, give him fresh water and new seed, all the time talking to him most affectionately; then she would hang the cage out on the piazza where Robie could refresh himself with the view of the green trees and feel the cool summer breeze. He was a beautiful singer and fully deserved the affection of his little mistress. Sometimes, having carefully closed the doors and windows of the nursery, she would set him free for a frolic. He would fly all around the room, and at her bidding, would perch on her finger, her head or her shoulder. She would run after him, and he would fly away from her, and alight on the top of the window, from which he would look cunningly down upon her, with his head on one side, as if to say: "Ah, you can't catch me." She would call in vain to him for several minutes, suddenly, he would

fly down on her shoulder with a cry of joy, and allow her to put him in his cage.

Mrs. Allen had been invited to spend a few days with some relatives, in a neighboring city, to attend a grand fair. Mamie was delighted as she had never seen anything of the kind, but had heard her little cousins describe the beautiful dolls, books, and toys they had seen there. The only thing that marred her happiness was, that she must leave Robie to the care of Jane, her nurse, who was a good girl, only sometimes a little careless in the discharge of her duties. Several days before leaving home, Mamie begged her to take good care of her little favorite.

“Now, Jane,” she would say, “be very particular to give him fresh water, and fresh seed every morning, and don’t forget to hang his cage out on the piazza, and remember to take it in every night; and talk to him just as I do, so he won’t miss me too much; and, Jane, be careful when you clean his cage not to let him

get out, because you know he might want to come after me, and the poor little fellow might get lost or eaten up by some big cat. Ah, I was going to forget the most important thing of all. Every night, before you go to bed, sing to him the little songs I always sing, then he will think I am there and he will sleep better."

Jane, although much amused by the solicitude of her little mistress, promised to take the best care of the bird during her absence.

Finally the day of departure arrived. Mrs. Allen took her seat in the carriage, Mamie followed, and the last thing before starting, she put her pretty little hand out of the window, and cried to her nurse: "Jane, take good care of Robie."

Several hours' ride brought our travelers to the home of their friends, where Mamie found many little companions of her own age, with whom she was soon on the best terms. They played, walked, rode and spent whole afternoons at the

Train together, where Mamie was enchanted with all the beautiful things she saw.

She did not, however, forget her bird; she spoke to her little friends of him, extolled his beauty, his many charming qualities, his intelligence, and had she only known how to write she would undoubtedly have dispatched a letter every day to her nurse, to inquire how Robie was getting along.

She was not sorry when her mother told her they were to return home. Although she had enjoyed her visit exceedingly, she rejoiced at the prospect of again seeing her little favorite. No sooner had the carriage stopped at the door than she sprang out, crying:

“Jane, Jane, here we are; and here are some beautiful flowers—put them in water. I have brought some fresh plantain which I picked in the field for Robie this morning, and I have brought you some nice gingerbread, for the good care

you have taken of him. How is he, Jane?"

"Oh, he is very well," answered Jane, smiling, "he has taken a good bath every morning, and he has asked me to let him out several times, but you had forbid me."

"That is right," said Mamie; "poor little fellow, he was pining away here, while I was enjoying myself—it is too bad. I must run and see him. Robie, Robie, here is little mistress; come and kiss me, little darling!"

She opened the door of the cage and the little bird hopped out on her shoulder, singing his sweetest notes, as if to welcome her return.

After having caressed Robie a little while, she inspected his cage, and her face became scarlet with rage.

"Jane, how careless you are!" she exclaimed; "look at the dirt in this cage; I don't believe you have cleaned it since we went away."

"Indeed, Miss Mamie, you are mis-

taken," said the girl, "I have cleaned it; ask Bridget if I,"—

"Great story teller," cried the child, her temper bursting forth in all its fury; "you have not; you did not mind what I told you. There is no seed in his cup, and this water is dirty. Oh, you horrid thing."

"Well," said Jane, "did you want me to leave all my work to attend to the bird? After all, Robie is only a canary, and there are yet plenty of them in the world."

At these words, Mamie, unable to control herself longer, jumped on her nurse, bit, scratched, kicked and called her all kinds of injurious names. Jane, escaping from the hands of the little fury, ran to complain to her mistress.

Mamie, still trembling with rage, fell heavily on a sofa near by. A little plaintive cry made her spring up again, and she beheld Robie dead; she had fallen on him, and crushed him. Her anger van-

ished, and grief filled her heart, she took him in her hands and tried to revive him; but all her efforts proved fruitless, he was dead, and she had killed him. Great tears rolled down her cheeks, and she sobbed aloud.

Her mother hastened to the nursery, and found her pressing the dead bird to her heart.

“My child she cried, “what has happened?”

“Oh, mamma, such a misfortune! I fell on the sofa — Robie was on it — I fell on him — and crushed him.”

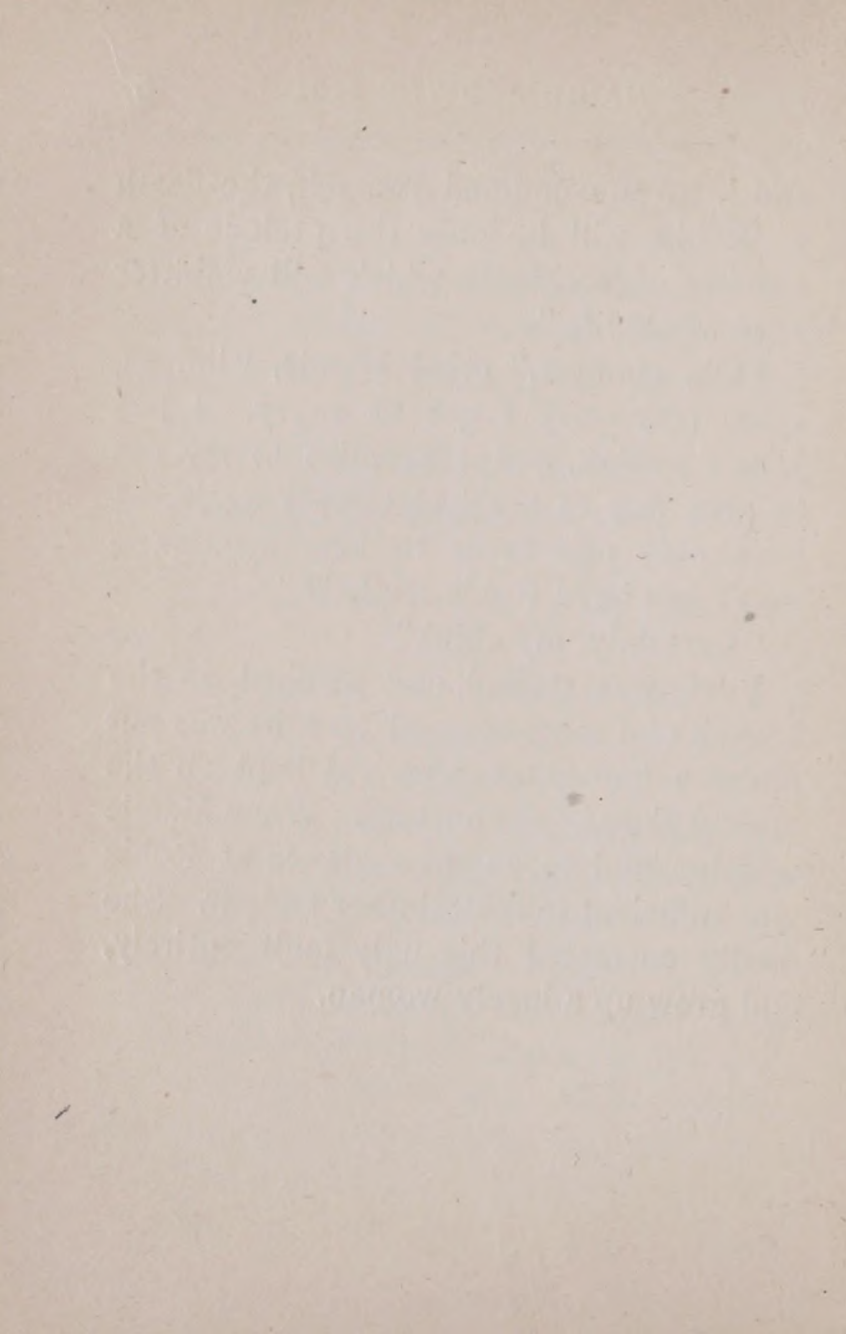
“Yes, my child, I understand; you gave vent to your anger, and this is your punishment. You beat your nurse because she had not time to give the bird all the care he required. In your blind fury, you lost all command over yourself, and you have killed your little favorite. You can blame no one but yourself. Remember, my child, if you do not endeavor to moderate the violence of your temper,

and learn to command yourself, the death of Robie, will be only the prelude of a number of accidents which will embitter your whole life."

"Oh, mamma," cried Mamie, "indeed, I am very sorry I got so angry. I beg Jane's pardon, and I promise to try not to give way to my bad temper again. I have only one favor to beg, mamma—won't you have Robie stuffed?"

"Certainly, my child."

Robie was stuffed, and perched on the branch of a moss-covered tree, he was put under a fine glass case, and kept on the mantel-piece in the nursery. When Mamie was inclined to anger, a glance at Robie was sufficient to restrain her temper. She finally corrected this ugly fault entirely, and grew up a lovely woman.





MISS HELEN.

WHY, Clara, what in the world is the matter? What has happened to make you act more like a savage than a young lady in her teens?"

These words were addressed by Mrs. Lemont to her eldest daughter, whom she had just seen act rudely towards her old nurse, going so far as to push her out of the room and lock the door in her presence, whilst her younger sisters stood back in perfect awe, lest they in their turn should fall victims to her fury.

"Why," continued her mother, "such conduct is perfectly outrageous. What would Father Hagan say if he saw you

now? It is useless to belong to Sodalities and wear Scapulars, etc., if you do not curb that frightful temper." Clara, who, although fiery tempered, was otherwise good, in a moment remembered all the lectures she had had on that subject, and all her promises to amend—so she was now truly ashamed of herself, and throwing her arms around her mother's neck, implored her pardon. "My child, it is God you have offended. Ask his forgiveness, and after that seek your gentle old nurse, and ask her pardon."

"Well, mamma," replied Clara, "Nancy is old, and I believe she is doting. Because she has known you so long, she takes too many liberties, and is sometimes very impudent. Still I love her dearly, and although she made me very angry, I will go and do what you desire."

"Not now, my child. Stay a moment. Come here, all three of you; sit down by the window with me, and I will relate some of my youthful misconduct, which, per-

haps, will serve as a good lesson for the future.

“Being a rich planter’s only child, I need scarcely tell you I was caressed by every one, and consequently spoiled. I had fine times, going where I choose, and coming when I thought proper. One summer, while my parents went North, I was left at Aunt Margaret’s, under the care of my colored nurse. The excessive heat began to tell on me, and for fear of its making me ill, I was immediately, with my nurse, despatched for a few weeks to the Gulf-coast, where some of our friends resided

“It took me but a short time to recruit; then came the jolly times; although nurse was the responsible one, it was I who ruled her. Our mornings were spent rambling in the woods, gathering pine-tops, hunting butterflies, and tying mosquito-hawks by the tails, with various other such amusements. Then came bath, luncheon, and mid-day nap; after which dress for

dinner. But my grand enjoyment for the day, was a frolic with all my comrades on the beach ; then we caught crabs and craw-fish, built sand houses, and gathered shells ; of these shells there were a great variety, and this particular evening of which I speak, I had a fancy for a shell something of the nature of a snail, but much larger and of quicker motion. Ah ! poor nurse, how she begged me to let those dirty creatures alone. But nothing would satisfy me only a basketful of these to my room. Nurse thinking the easiest way to get me from the beach was to comply, and trusting to the duskiess of the hour to conceal her woolly head, took off her turban, opened it out and set to work to fill it with 'them ere varmints,' whilst I, as busy as a bee, crammed my pockets, as best I could, with the same varmints. When we were both fully loaded with our live-stock, we started for the hotel. Being fatigued from my extra work, after drinking a glass of milk, I arranged myself

comfortably in bed, and in a few moments was sound asleep; nurse following my example, soon betook herself to her cosey cot in the alcove off my room. On awaking in the night, I heard a kind of quiet, sliding noise, which alarmed me. I started for nurse's bed, and in doing so, my bare feet came in contact with pointed, sticky lumps; each step I took only increased the disagreeable feeling, and in perfect terror I reached my nurse. By the light of the moon she discerned me, and her first words were:

“‘Oh, Miss Helen, what brought you here? I’s been wake dis hours, and feerd to call, for I do believe the devil is wid me. Sumting bees licking my face, and now sumtings pulling my toe; the candle’s right at your hand, honey, and I’s kind of frighted. If you’ll only strike de match and let’s see what is de matter.’

“I was too glad to oblige her, in order to find out my own cause of annoyance, and in a few moments what did we see but

'dem varmints' sprawling in every direction, from floor to ceiling. As soon as nurse discovered her tormenters were something besides the devil her fears vanished, and she set to work to brush the 'varmint' from walls and floor.

"'Dere, now, Miss Helen, I told you dem was varmints, and I'se right; and now I'll teach dem to keep in der place and not be creeping on Christian bodies.' Saying which she had them all gathered together in a heap in the middle of the room, and taking a sheet off her bed, commenced putting them in it. But they became quite active and refractory; nurse called me to assist her, which I positively refused to do; certainly not from overfondness of my pets, but from pure stubbornness; and I'm sure we cut beautiful figures, in our night-dresses, she brushing and I pouting. However, after considerable trouble, nurse managed to tie them up, and, to my horror, opening her window, she threw sheet and contents to the ground.

“ ‘If you believe in dem ere varmints for pets, Miss Helen, den you must get a cage for dem ; for de likes of dem won’t come to my room ’gin, honey ; so now let’s go to bed and get some sleep, for I’s e bin wake half de night. Thank de Lord it wan’ de devil.’

“ ‘Well, nurse,’ I said, ‘you had no right to throw out my beautiful shells, and I will remember what you have done this night, and perhaps make you remember, too.’ Saying which I walked off, quite indignant. I was sulky for two days after this event, and at the end of the week Aunt Margaret wrote, stating that Mr. Lane (an old friend, who now and then would jokingly call me his wild daughter-in-law), was spending a few days on the plantation, and was anxious to see me. So we made all speed home.

“ Our friend stayed some time with us ; and the night previous to his departure he startled the whole household by announcing his having been robbed of consider-

able money. Aunt Margaret was much troubled, and, notwithstanding a rigid search, the thief was not discovered.

“I, like all meddlesome children, had to have a say in the matter ; and still having spite in my heart against poor nurse, without positively asserting the fact, I insinuated that she was the guilty party. Poor woman, how I remember her looks ; she almost turned white from indignation and shame.

“Being questioned on the subject, the more she denied it the more I declared her guilt, and thus told at least a dozen lies to conceal the original one. No more light being thrown on the subject, Mr. Lane, after a delay of several days, bade us adieu and started for home.

“About four weeks afterwards my parents returned ; when affairs began to settle down for the winter, it was agreed that I was too old to be allowed any longer to run wild, and in order to tame me a little, I was placed at a convent not far from

New Orleans, under the charge of the good nuns. I remained there six years. Oh, how often during that time did my conscience reproach me, and how often did I wish to exonerate poor nurse of what I had accused her. How could I ever have courage to tell the truth? However, I made up my mind, whatever it cost, the truth must be spoken. I had not been in the convent a year when the first gun from Fort Sumpter declared open rebellion, and my father was one of the first to offer his services to defend his native State, and had formed a company at his own expense.

“How clearly I remember the day he came to bid me good-bye! With a forced smile he told me of all the wonderful feats he proposed to perform; and full of hope he gave me a final embrace. Little did either of us think it was our last parting; but so God had ordained.

“Well, to make my story short: when I left the convent it was to find every thing

and every one changed. My once beautiful home had been destroyed, and from affluence we were reduced to comparative poverty ; mother and I had both to struggle on as best we could.

“As soon as an opportunity occurred, I revealed in full how I had belied nurse Sylvia, and expressed my deep regret. It was then I ascertained that nurse had been so mortified by the blemish thrown on her character, that it quite impaired her health, and she even begged to be sold out of our family, in which she had lived from infancy. The breaking out of the war had changed her plans, her natural goodness of heart overcame her own personal feelings, and she declared she would never leave “Missus, whilst Massa was away.” Towards the end of the war, when Lincoln’s proclamation of freedom was announced, my mother told nurse she was then her own mistress, and could go where she wished to earn money for her own support, for she was not able to pay her wages.

“So nurse, after making her mistress as comfortable as possible, started off for unknown quarters. The only message she left was to tell ‘Miss Helen she forgave her, and would always pray for her.’

“All this quite surprised me — but to my story. Some three years later we were surprised by a visit from the son of our old friend, Mr. Lane, who stayed a long while with us, and on the eve of his departure asked my mother’s permission to marry me ; saying he had come purposely to see if his former little sweetheart had been satisfied with the result of his visit, and now was anxious to realize his father’s wishes.

“Of course, my mother’s consent was readily given, and he referred to me. When informed of his intentions, I told him candidly I could never marry him without first revealing, not only to him but also to his father, a very dark stain on my character which would probably impress him with a very different opinion

of one whom he had held in such high esteem.

“Then I rehearsed, as near as I could remember, poor old Sylvia’s tale, and, it is needless to say, lover-like, he fully forgave me, saying time might afford me an opportunity to repair the evil done. For several years after my marriage I remained at my mother’s; but my husband’s business bringing him frequently North he determined to live there.

“We had scarcely got fixed in Philadelphia when one day, being out, an old negress passed me, and the next moment I heard a familiar voice say, ‘Oh, dat young lady’s got Miss Helen’s eyes.’ Turning around, who was gazing after me but dear, good old Sylvia. Forgetting where we were, we almost rushed into each other’s arms. All thought of social distinction was forgotten, and had she been my sister, I could not have been more delighted; how glad I was to have the opportunity of expressing my remorse for my re-

venge of years past. She was then on her way to secure a place as a seamstress, and asked if I would give her a line as reference, which would enable her to obtain a quiet home. "I will do all I can for you but if I should offer you as good a situation would you accept it? Her reply was :

"'The very sight of you, my honey, would make me happy, and it would cheer my old heart to be with you.'

"'But, Sylvia,' I asked, 'can you ever fully forgive me the wrong I have done you?'

"'My dear, I forgave that folly years ago, and as anxious as I am to go with you, I will only do so on one condition, that you will never again allude to the act which you have committed in thoughtlessness, and which has caused you so much remorse. In order that it may be forgotten, I beg from this forward you will call me by my second name, Nancy, instead of Sylvia, and let the story be buried with the name.'

“Truly rejoiced at my bargain we went home together, and this is the first time I have broken my word by telling the wrongs my cruel conduct inflicted on poor Sylvia. Owing to the peculiar circumstances under which it is revealed, I am sure she, with her usual generosity, will forgive me. What is more, I feel certain she will be able to trace from whom Miss Clara inherits that frightful temper, so you now know that your good old nurse was also your mother’s most faithful and devoted friend; and it will always deeply afflict me to hear the least disrespectful word uttered towards her.”

“Oh! mamma, mamma, I never would have acted thus had I known all this before! Why did you not tell us? And now I shall never cease my kindness to that dear old woman, and I shall, without delay, go and ask her pardon.”

I need scarcely add that my story had a most salutary effect. Henceforward Clara kept her temper under control, and

in a year's time, from being the wild fire-brand of the house, she became a submissive, obedient and gentle child. Old Sylvia, now gray and feeble, often says :

“If them ere shining varmint's gave me trouble years ago, their history has been the cause now of all my happiness, for it has secured me a sweet, gentle angel, who promises to watch over her old nurse Sylvia till her dying day.”





NEVER SATISFIED.

ONCE upon a time there lived in a miserable hut a man and his wife ; and when month after month rolled away, and things got no better, they began to abuse each other for their wretched circumstances. “It is your fault,” and “No, it is your fault,” they were always saying to one another ; till one day, in the midst of their wrangling, a bird flew by, and said : “How now, what’s the matter ?”

“Ah, matter indeed !” exclaimed the woman ; “it is just this : we are as badly off as we well can be, and we should like to live like other people, in a decent house. That is all we want to satisfy us.”

Well, without another word, the bird showed them into a pretty cottage, with a nice garden before and behind, and said to them :

“All this is yours. Live contentedly here. But if you want me, clap your hands together thrice, and say :

“Golden bird, in diamond hall!
Golden bird, high over all!
Golden bird, 'tis thee we call ! ”

With these words the bird flew away, and the man and his wife were glad that they had no more to dwell in their miserable hut, but in a nice house and garden. Their contentment, however, was not of long duration ; for, chancing to see a great farm-house which stood close by them surrounded by barns and outbuildings, and meadows well stocked with cattle, they were so captivated with it, that in a fortnight from the time they entered the cottage they clapped hands thrice, and summoned the golden bird.

“Golden bird, in diamond hall !
Golden bird, high over all !
Golden bird, 'tis thee we call ! ”

Whish ! the bird flew in at the window, and asked what they wanted.

“Alas !” said they, “we find this house too small ; with a farm-house like our neighbor’s we should be quite contented.”

No sooner said than done ! The bird looked inquiringly in the face of the man ; but, without a word, he transported them into a fine farm-house, with all the necessary buildings, and a well-stocked farm. The worthy pair were almost beside themselves with joy to find their wishes so easily fulfilled, and for a whole year they rested satisfied with what they had, and wished for nothing better. But soon came a change : they began now to go to the neighboring towns, and there they saw stately looking houses, and crowds of richly dressed ladies and gentlemen walking about the streets. “Ah,” thought they, “it must be a good thing to live in a city ; one need not work at all there ;” and the wife was especially anxious to be a fine lady.

"Come, we will live in town," said she to her husband; "call the golden bird; we have been quite long enough in this dull place!"

But her husband would not agree, and so the woman summoned the bird herself.

"What now! said the bird, as it flew in at the window.

"Oh," said the woman, "we are tired of leading a country life; we would like to see a little of town, and dress somewhat smarter than heretofore: no doubt we shall be satisfied then."

The golden bird looked at her this time very sharply, but said not a word, only led them to as fine a house as there was in the town. Everything was one of the best, inside and outside the house; the furniture and all else, down to the wardrobes and closets, which were filled with fine dresses of the latest fashion. The man and his wife thought for the time they could not be better off, and their joy was as extravagant as before. But as usual, it did not

last long. They now took it into their heads they should like to belong to the nobility, have a grand carriage, with footmen behind in gold-laced livery; everything else seemed now so much town-trumpery!

“It is your turn now,” said the wife to her husband; “it is your turn to summon the bird.”

He refused at first; but at last he was forced to do as she wished, to avoid her teasing, and the bird was called.

“What can you want now?” said the bird, flying in at the window. The man told him. Then the bird gave him an angry look which pierced his very heart, and said: “You discontented people! when will you have enough! I will do as you wish, but it will be of no good!”

So they became members of the nobility, and lived in an exceedingly grand palace, with no end of servants and carriages at their command. All day long they walked or rode about, and had nothing to do in

the shape of exertion except read the news, and even that was sometimes too much fatigue for them.

But one day they went to the capital, to attend a great *fete*. There they saw the king and queen, splendidly dressed, seated in a most magnificent carriage, and surrounded on all sides by marshals, out-riders, courtiers, and soldiers, while all the people, as the cavalcade went by, pulled off their hats and made low bows, and cheered as loudly as they could. Alas, how their hearts burned with envy! As soon as they reached home, they agreed they must and would be king and queen themselves. So both clapping their hands at once, they sang in concert :

“Golden bird, in diamond hall!
Golden bird, high over all!
Golden bird, 'tis thee we call!”

Immediately the bird appeared, and asked their wishes.

“We must be king and queen,” was their reply.

The bird flashed fire almost from his eyes, ruffled his feathers, beat his wings, and at last exclaimed :

“You vexatious people ! when will you be satisfied ? I will, indeed, make you king and queen ; but there you will not stop, for you know not how to be satisfied !”

So king and queen they became, and had everything at beck and nod in their own dominions. They kept great state, and all the ministers and courtiers had to kneel at their feet very humbly before they could obtain anything they wanted. All the under-governors, too, had to appear before them to receive the royal commands and from every part of their dominions they caused to be brought whatever was of worth and beauty ; so that round their court a splendor was spread which cannot be described. Yet with all this they were not satisfied.

“We must be higher yet !” was still their cry.

“I must be emperor !” cried the man.

“No, not enough ; you must be pope !” cried the woman.

Scarcely had she said the words when there came a great whirlwind, and in the midst of it flew by a black eagle with eyes of fire, which came in at the window of the palace, and cried out :

“Back to your hovel ! Back to your hovel !”

And lo, all their magnificence vanished in smoke ! Back again in their wretched hut they found themselves ; and there they had to stay for the rest of their days.





THE PRIZES.

QH, mamma!" cried Ella Grayson, one bright September afternoon as she returned from school, "who do you think has moved into that beautiful new house on the hill?"

"I do not know dear; I have heard nothing about it," answered Mrs. Grayson.

"It is Mr. Woodcourt, mamma, and his daughter Blanche came to school to-day; they must be very rich for she dresses beautifully. And, mamma, she has such pretty blue eyes, and long golden curls; she is to be in my class, and I am sure I shall like her very much."

Mrs. Grayson smiled at her daughter's enthusiasm.

"Why do you expect to love Blanche? Is it because she has a pretty face and wears fine clothes?"

"Oh, no, mamma, not exactly, I know it would be foolish to love any one for such a reason; but I love to look at her she is so pretty. Indeed, mamma, I should like to have such curls. It must be nice to be rich like Blanche, and have some one wait on you. She has a French maid who comes to school with her to carry her books, and I heard her tell Clara Wells that she dressed her, curls her hair, and makes all her clothes, so Blanche has nothing to do but attend to her lessons."

"I would rather see my little girl wait on herself, and learn to be useful to others, than to see a servant always at her side. I know that you are not fond of sewing; but I would be sorry to see you grow up without learning to use your needle skilfully. Should I neglect

this branch of your education you would be the first one to regret it when you are old enough to understand these matters. Every woman, whatever her position, should understand sewing; if she does not need to do it herself, she will most probably have to direct others. Do you remember, Ella, how happy you felt last Christmas when you carried those warm flannel dresses you made to poor Mrs. Haynes' little girls, who had nothing warm to wear. Would you prefer, my child, not to know how to sew?"

"Oh, no, indeed, mamma, I am glad I made those dresses for the poor children."

"I know, my dear Ella," continued Mrs. Grayson, "that you admire whatever is beautiful, and it shows a refined taste: but you must not forget that a beautiful disposition is a higher and more precious gift than a beautiful face; but I trust Blanche is as good as she is pretty."

Mrs. Grayson was a widow; her husband had died four years before our story

opens, leaving her a pretty little cottage in the village of Sago and a small income sufficient to support herself and daughter who was then eight years old ; she was refined and highly educated. Had her husband lived, she would, no doubt, have one day enjoyed all the advantages wealth can purchase, but cut off in the prime of life, he left her as sole heritage a name honored and respected, and a sufficient income to keep her from want. To procure her daughter all the advantages of education, she taught music and painting. Ella had a decided taste for the arts. She loved music and already played remarkably well for one of her age ; she was ambitious to learn, and Miss Wilson considered her one of her best scholars. She was affectionate, amiable and cheerful, and generally loved by her young companions.

The house on the hill of which Ella had spoken was a large mansion surrounded by wide piazzas, the grounds were ele-

gantly laid out, and the rich colors of the flowers contrasted beautifully with the green lawn; the place had an air of luxury and comfort. The villagers of Sago had often wondered who was to inhabit this fine dwelling. As soon as it was completed, Mr. Woodcourt, a rich merchant retired from business, solved the mystery by taking possession. His family consisted of his wife and daughter Blanche, who was about Ella's age. Mrs. Woodcourt was devoted to society and pleasure, and was fond of display and flattery. Blanche was beautiful and intellectual; her mother was proud of her, and determined that her daughter should one day be an ornament of society, she gave her all the advantages of a brilliant education. From her cradle she had been petted, indulged and flattered; no warning voice ever admonished her of her faults: it probably never occurred to her that she had any; no wonder, then, that she was growing up vain, selfish and haughty. Had her at-

tention been directed to these defects, she might have been a very different child, for she was not devoid of good qualities. Miss Wilson understood her character, and resolved to do all in her power to correct her.

Ella and Blanche were in the same classes. Ella held the first place, and Blanche, notwithstanding her repeated efforts to surpass her, had only succeeded in becoming second.

Miss Wilson had promised a prize to the one who should excel in Arithmetic at the Christmas examination. The prize was to be a beautiful little writing desk completely furnished, and all the scholars were ambitious to win it.

"I don't like that Ella Grayson," said Blanche one day to her friend Clara Wells, at recess.

"Why not?" asked Clara.

"Oh, she feels so grand because she is always at the head of the class. She thinks she knows more than any of the

girls ; pshaw ! I could get above her if I chose to try."

"I don't think she is any smarter than you are," answered Clara, who greatly admired Blanche, and courted her favor. Why don't you win the prize, just to take Ella down a little?"

"Because it is too much trouble," replied Blanche in a careless tone. "I know Ella is pretty smart, but I think she must cheat in some way so as never to lose her place ; besides, Miss Wilson is partial to her, I believe she likes her better than any girl in school. For my part I don't see what there is to like about her, she is so conceited, she need not hold her head so high either, for her mother is only a teacher. Mamma said I might have a party in Christmas week ; she told me to invite all the nice girls I wanted from school, but I told her there were not many I really cared to call my friends, so many of them are poor," said Blanche with a contemptuous toss of her head. "I shall

invite you, Louise Emerson and Edith Evelyn, Sadie Bronson and Annie White, because they belong to our band, but I would not have that disagreeable Ella Grayson in our house."

This conversation was overheard by May Benson, a little girl who was deeply attached to Ella. Ella had often helped her with her exercises, and had protected her against the malice of the larger girls. As soon as school was over, she ran to Ella looking very important, and asked if she might accompany her home, as she had something to tell her. Ella consented, and passing May's arm through hers, they walked off together. Then May related the conversation that had passed between Blanche and Clara.

"How did you hear them?" asked Ella, her face flushed with anger.

"I was sitting in the arbor, and they were walking up and down the gravel walk, so I could hear all they said," answered May.

Ella broke away from her little companion and ran home. Mrs. Grayson looked up as her daughter entered the room, and perceived by her disturbed face that something was wrong. "What is the matter, my child?" she asked.

"Oh, mamma, I think Blanche Woodcourt is contemptible! I hate her! How could she say such things! I'll speak to her to-morrow, so she won't do it again!" cried Ella in a burst of anger.

"Ella, calm yourself, and tell me what all this is about." Ella sat down on a little stool at her mother's feet, and told her the whole story as it had been related to her by May.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Grayson, "Blanche was very unkind to speak so. I know my little girl would not be deceitful," she continued brushing her hair from her daughter's forehead, "and Miss Wilson is too conscientious in the performance of her duty to be partial to any of her scholars."

"Blanche is a story-teller and I despise her!" broke from Ella's compressed lips.

"No, my child, you must not feel so toward her," said Mrs. Grayson; "remember you say every day, 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us;' we must learn to forgive others as we would wish our Heavenly Father to forgive us, and remember, my child, that Blanche, perhaps, has never been taught how wrong it is to despise the poor, and to talk against our neighbors. You must endeavor to repress all angry and uncharitable feelings, and return good for evil. May did very wrong to listen to a conversation that was not intended for her ears, and it was also wrong for her to repeat it to you. You must tell her so to-morrow, and caution her to say no more about it."

Ella dearly loved her mother and tried to obey her instructions. The next day she found it very difficult not to say some-

thing disagreeable to Blanche, but resolving to act in accordance with her mother's lessons, she conquered herself so far as to offer Blanche her slate when she heard her remark that hers had been forgotten at home. A few weeks after she bore off the prize, much to the envy of Blanche who had really tried for the honor, but who was too proud to acknowledge it, and concealed her vexation under the mask of indifference.

Summer was approaching and school would soon close. On the last day of the term several prizes were always given and the girls were called upon to show their proficiency in music, in presence of their parents and friends. Drawings and paintings were also exhibited. The prizes were for French and English composition, Arithmetic and History. Miss Wilson never examined the compositions herself when they were to compete for the prize, but handed them over to a neighboring college that they might be examined by one

of the Professors. Blanche felt confident that she would excel in French as she was more familiar with the language than the other scholars, having formerly had a French governess; she thought Ella would probably carry off most of the others. She feared also that Ella would play more brilliantly than she, and that Ella's autumn landscape would be more admired than her summer scene. As she pondered over this prospect she resolved that she would not be eclipsed before her friends by one she considered so much her inferior.

The compositions were all written and laid on Miss Wilson's desk. The children had gone home very much excited wondering who would win the prizes, and talking about what they should wear. Blanche went part of the way home, then pretending that she had forgotten a book for which she must return, hurried back to the school-room. She found it vacant, she went to Miss Wilson's desk, the com-

positions were still there. Hastily looking for Ella's she observed four neatly and closely written pages, which was at least a page more than her own. She carefully erased the name and wrote her own instead, then taking her composition which she had purposely left nameless, she wrote Ella's name. Having done this she replaced the papers as they were before and hurriedly left the room saying to herself: "Miss Ella shan't get so far ahead of me as she thinks."

The last day of the term arrived. The schoolroom was decorated with flowers; the girls were all in white. The music and singing were pronounced excellent. Ella's brilliant execution and Blanche's fine voice were much admired. Ella received the prize of Arithmetic, Edith Evelyn that of History, and Blanche those awarded to French and English composition, which she went forward to receive with a triumphant look at Ella.

"Mamma, I don't see how it is that I

did not receive the prize of English composition," said Ella, on their return home. "I always had higher marks than Blanche, and you know you thought this was the best composition I had ever written."

"I know, dear; but the Professor is a competent judge; your composition was very good, but he may have found more merit in Blanche's."

Blanche received the congratulations of her parents and friends on her success, but she did not feel quite happy. Did her friends know of her deceit she felt they would despise her. She spent the vacations travelling with her parents. Mrs. Grayson and her daughter spent part of the summer on the farm of a relative.

In September, the girls returned to school. It was the first time that Ella and Blanche met since the day of the prizes. Ella bade Blanche a kind welcome, which the other gracefully returned. The injury she had done Ella ever rankled at her heart, and she wanted to ease her

conscience by being as cordial to her as possible. The two girls appeared to get on better than formerly, as Blanche seemed inclined to be more friendly.

It was in the month of December; Blanche had not been to school for several days, and the girls heard she had typhoid fever. As she daily grew worse, her parents became very much alarmed, and sent to the city for the most eminent physician; fears were entertained that she would not recover.

One night, after a heavy sleep of several hours, she awoke quite conscious; she felt that she was very sick, and the fear that she would die arose in her mind. All the sins of her life seemed to come before her. Her feelings of envy, jealousy, vanity, her want of charity, and the prize she had stolen from Ella filled her with apprehension. Her conscience had troubled her ever since she had done the wicked deed. Honor and praise were all she had ever striven for. Her religious education had

been sadly neglected. A few hurried prayers at night were all she ever uttered. She now began to understand the nature of the precepts which Miss Wilson had tried to impress upon her mind. She lay for several hours thinking of these things, and wishing she had been a better girl; she prayed more earnestly than she had ever done before. Then she resolved to send for Ella on the following day, confess her fault, and beg her forgiveness. She felt it would cost her a great effort thus to humiliate herself before one she had always considered her inferior; but she felt it would, in a measure, repair her fault, and she was anxious to rid her conscience of its burden. The next morning, when the nurse was relieved by the anxious mother, Blanche said: "Mamma, I feel very ill; perhaps I am going to die."

"Oh, my dear child, do not talk so! I cannot bear it! I cannot give you up!" cried Mrs. Woodcourt in tears.

"Mamma, I want to see Ella Grayson ;

will you send for her?" asked Blanche, after a few moments' silence, during which she watched her mother's tearful face.

"Ella Grayson!" exclaimed Mrs. Woodcourt in astonishment. "What can you possibly want with her, darling? I thought you told me that you did not like her."

"That is true, mamma, but I want to see her very much; won't you send the carriage for her."

Mrs. Woodcourt thought her daughter's mind must be wandering, but not wishing to contradict her sick child she rang the bell, and ordered the coachman to go to Miss Wilson, and ask her to excuse Miss Grayson for an hour, as her daughter desired to see her.

The astonishment of Ella may well be imagined when she heard this message. She stepped into the carriage, and in a few moments was at the bedside of her companion."

"Oh, Ella!" exclaimed Blanche, as she entered the room, "I have done you a

great injury, and I have sent for you to ask your forgiveness."

"Dear Blanche," said Ella, "what injury could you have done me? What have I to forgive?"

"Oh, I did a wicked, wicked thing!" cried Blanche. Then she told the story of the composition, and how she had changed the names, and defrauded Ella of her prize.

Ella heard in astonishment; she hardly thought it possible such deceit could have been practised; but a glance at the pale face on the pillow dispelled every feeling of resentment, and throwing her arms around the sick girl she assured her of her full forgiveness.

"Ask Miss Wilson to come and see me to-morrow," she said, as Ella was leaving.

Miss Wilson came the next day and Blanche, in a feeble voice, made a full confession of her fault, and begged her forgiveness; she asked her to take the prize and present it to Ella in presence of all her schoolmates, explaining how she had

been defrauded of her rights. The kind teacher felt sorry to expose her pupil to such humiliation; but she felt more grieved to find her guilty of such a serious sin. She spoke very kindly to Blanche, and as she had often done before, pointed out the evils to which all unchecked faults may lead.

“Oh, Miss Wilson!” cried Blanche, “I hope I shall get well. If I do I will be a better girl. It was very kind of Ella to forgive me so readily. I hope I shall be able to repair all my unkindness towards her. As soon as I am able to go out, will you take me in your Sunday-school class and teach me to be good?”

“Certainly, my child, and while you are sick I will come to see you as often as possible.”

It was several weeks before Blanche was able to leave the house, but the season of sickness proved a fruitful one to her. In the spring she was able to return to school. She felt very much ashamed to meet her

companions again, as she feared they would despise her. Some, indeed, had felt very much incensed against her ; but Miss Wilson told them that Ella had freely forgiven her, and she trusted they would do the same ; instead of avoiding her they must all help her to do better, as she was truly repentant. With Ella for her friend, Blanche found it less difficult than she had anticipated to take her old place once more at school. Her companions found her much changed. She mingled more among the girls, her haughty manners were gone, she was really trying to conquer her fault ; and her kind teacher had every reason to hope that she would grow up lovely in the virtues which adorn the Christian.



STORY OF A TEACUP.

THE teacup had many cracks across it, but it was nevertheless a very beautiful teacup, with lilies and roses and forget-me-nots and butterflies painted on it; the handle was gold, and there was a deep border of gold round the rim. The mother kept it in a glass corner cupboard high up, and the children got upon chairs to look at it.

“Who broke the cup?” asked little Jack, the youngest child.

“I did,” said the mother.

“You, mother!” exclaimed the children in a chorus; “we thought you never broke anything.”

"How could you be so careless, mother? Was it when you were a very little girl?" asked Charlotte.

"I was a little girl when I broke it," said the mother; "but it was not through carelessness; I was in a passion."

"Mother! in a passion!" There was an incredulous look, with something of awe in it, upon the children's faces. They drew nearer to their mother and looked up anxiously at her.

"Oh, mother, it cannot be true; it's only a tale."

"It is quite true, Lotty. It happened on a Christmas eve many, many years ago, when I was a passionate little girl; and if I was angry with any one I never minded what I did."

Again the chorus rose up, "Mother!" and the little faces assumed a very serious expression.

"Shall I tell you how it all happened?" asked the mother.

"Yes, oh, yes!"

And the children came closer to their mother ; Lotty sat down upon the hearth-rug beside her, whilst Rose perched upon one arm of the chair, and little Jack seated himself on his mother's lap.

“ Yes, Lotty, I was a very naughty little girl at one time, and it did not seem to any one that I should ever be good. I was the youngest child of your grandfather and grandmother, and had been petted and spoiled and allowed to have my own way too much. But no one had thought of this until your grandmother, who was a very gentle, meek woman, began to see what a dreadful temper I had. She tried to reason with me, but in vain : for when I was in a passion it only made me more angry, and when I was in a good temper she was afraid of rousing me.

“ When I was about ten years old your grandfather died. He had been to see his only sister, who was living in France, and on his way home he caught a violent cold, which, growing worse and worse, turned to

fever, of which he died in a few days after his return home. On his journey he bought the beautiful teacup, which is of Sevres china, and brought it as a present for your grandmother. It was the last thing he ever gave to her, so you may imagine how she prized it. It was kept locked up, as I keep it, excepting on special occasions when it was brought out to be used by her. On her wedding day, on your grandfather's birthday, and on Christmas eve, she always drank her tea from the Sevres china teacup.

"The last time it was used was on a Christmas eve.

"It had been a bright, clear, frosty day, and we had all been busy putting up the holly and mistletoe. Your grandfather's picture was wreathed with holly and ivy, and underneath it on a bracket was a bunch of beautiful hot-house flowers. The room was lighted up, the fire was blazing up the chimney, the table was laid for tea, and the china teacup placed ready for my mother.

“There were six of us boys and girls, and some of our cousins had come to help us to have a merry evening. We were looking forward to ‘Hunt the Slipper,’ ‘Blindman’s Buff,’ ‘Forfeits,’ and all sorts of Christmas games. I had lost my temper several times during the day, as I wanted to have everything my own way, and the others, being older and wiser, would not allow me to have it. However, I had not had any very violent outburst, and we all sat down to tea; I, as the youngest, being seated beside your grandmother.

“As she poured the tea into your grandfather’s last gift, we all thought of him, and of the famous times we had had in the holidays when he was living, and I saw the tears come into your grandmother’s eyes, though she wiped them away, and talked to us as cheerfully as usual.”

Here the mother paused for a moment.

“Go on, mother,” said Rose; “what came next?”

"At one end of the table," continued the mother, "was a very pretty cake; it was iced over with sugar, and there was a group of doves made of sugar placed on the top of it.

"Your grandmother spoke to her eldest son, 'Stephen, will you cut up the cake?'

"So Stephen, your uncle Stephen, stood up and cut the cake into as many pieces as there were persons at the table, and amidst much mirth and laughter the cake was sent round.

"Now it so happened that the piece that fell to my share was either smaller, or I thought it so, than the rest, and in a moment I began to get very angry. I sat quite still for a minute, and then burst into a passionate fit of crying. Every one turned to look at me, wondering what was the matter.

"'What is it, Patty?' asked your grandmother.

"'They're as ill-natured as they can be to me, and they've given me the smallest

piece of cake,' I answered between my sobs ; 'but if I can't have as large a piece as the rest, I won't have any, and Stephen may have it back again.' And I raised the cake in my hand to throw it at my brother ; for, children, when my temper got the better of me I did not care what I did."

Charlotte grasped her mother's dress tighter, and little Jack, with his eyes growing rounder and rounder, said, "How naughty !"

"Yes," said the mother, "it was naughty. But the worst has to come. Your grandmother gently laid her hand upon my arm, saying, 'Hush, Patty, you shall have my piece.'

"But I was too angry to listen to her ; I shook her hand so rudely away that I knocked it against the beautiful teacup, which fell to the ground, breaking into half a dozen pieces, whilst the tea was all spilled over your grandmother's silk dress.

"There was a general silence, every one looked frightened, and I came to myself.

All the passion had left me, and I sat, white, trembling, and frightened. Your grandmother stooped and picked up the broken pieces, and laid them carefully in the saucer, and then she covered her face in her hands and burst out crying. 'My husband's last gift,' she said; 'his last gift. Oh, Patty, Patty, what have you done?' No one spoke; but at last my sister Lucy got up and came to your grandmother, and putting her arms round her neck, whispered, 'Poor mother, do not cry, perhaps it can be mended.'

"'I am foolish to cry, my children,' she said, looking up; 'but I thought so much of my teacup; your father brought it home on his last journey.'

"No one spoke to me; I seemed to be forgotten, and I stole out of the room and into my little bedroom, where, sitting down by the bedside, I laid my head against it and began to cry quietly. I had never felt so miserable in my life; it seemed as if all at once I had come to know how wicked

I was, and to think what my ungovernable passion might lead to. I grew quite frightened at myself ; I shivered and trembled, and could not tell how long I had been there, but it seemed a very long time. I heard the dining-room door open, and the party go across the hall into the drawing-room. But they went very quietly, not with the joyful merriment that should have been, for this wicked passion of mine had cast a gloom upon them all, and had awaked afresh all the grief that my mother was bearing so patiently.

“Presently nurse came into the room with a light. ‘You had better go to bed, Miss Patty,’ said she, ‘no one will want to see you again to-night ;’ and she put down her candle, and began to undress me. I made no objection, and was going to get into bed, when nurse said, ‘You’ve forgotten your prayers, Miss Patty. You should pray that your sinful temper may be taken away, and that you may grow to be a comfort instead of a torment to your mother.’

“So I knelt down, but my thoughts were all confused; I remember feeling that I was the worst girl in the world, and that I wished I could be better.

“When nurse went away I tried to go to sleep, but it was of no use. And every now and then the drawing-room door opened, and I fancied that my brothers and sisters and cousins were getting merrier, for there was more noise. ‘Yes,’ I thought, ‘they are enjoying themselves more without me; they are happier when they have no one to spoil their play, and here am I alone and miserable on Christmas eve. But it is my own fault,—it is my own fault.’

“Then I listened again, for again the door opened, and a louder burst of mirth came forth; so loud that I did not hear the footsteps that were coming nearer and nearer to my room, and I started when I heard some one close by my bed, and some one in the darkness put a hand upon mine.

Then your grandmother, for it was she, said, 'My poor little Patty!'

"In a moment my arms were round her neck, and I was sobbing.

"'Oh, mother! mother! what can I do? I am so wicked, and so unhappy!'

"'Yes, my child,' she replied, 'and you will be unhappy as long as you give way to your ungovernable temper. You see what mischief you do now; and you will grow worse and worse, till, at last, who knows but in a sudden passion, you might give a blow that might perhaps kill some one?'

"'Oh, mother, mother! I should never be so bad as that.'

"'You cannot tell,' answered my mother sadly; 'no one is bad all at once. It comes little by little, and at last it conquers us, and we are quite unable to resist.'

"'Mother, what shall I do?' I asked.

"'You must pray for strength to be a better girl,' said your grandmother; 'and you must watch all the time when you feel

the slightest rising of anger, so that you may put it away. It is of no use saying a prayer in the morning, if you don't try to act in accordance with the prayer. We have to strive as well as to pray.'

"I was silent, for I knew how difficult it would be.

"'I will try,' I answered; 'but I shall forget sometimes.'

"'I will help you,' said your grandmother, 'and I will give you something to remember by. I will have the cup mended, and it shall be yours, and when you look at the broken teacup it will put you in mind of the resolution you have made. And if your father's last gift to me should be the means of curing my little Patty's terrible temper, I shall look upon it, though it is pieced and disfigured, as more precious and beautiful than if it had never been broken.'

"And from that day the china teacup was mine, and I have kept it carefully. It was the means of opening my eyes to my

great sinfulness, and I value it more than any other piece of china that I possess."

Here the mother paused, and the children were silent, for it had been quite a new idea to them that their mother could ever have been a naughty little girl, she was so good now.

At last Charlotte, who had crept closer and closer to her mother, was now grasping her hand tightly, said, "I am glad that you were naughty when you were a little girl, mother."

"Oh, Lotty!" exclaimed Rose and little Jack in a tone of surprise.

"Yes," said Charlotte; "if mother was naughty when she was a little girl, perhaps I shall be as good as she is when I grow up to be a woman; and I was afraid until I heard this story that that was impossible."

The mother stroked Lotty's curly head.

"Mother is no better than other people," she said, smiling.

"Oh, yes, you are," said Rose; "there is no one like you."

Little Jack looked up, and said very gravely, "You are quite good now, mother; you will never break any more china tea-cups."





FLOREEN'S GOLDEN HAIR.

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl called Floreen, who lived with her mother in a pretty valley far away from the big world. All the people in this valley lived by growing flax, and sending it to the mills at a great distance, to be turned into yarn, and woven into many fabrics. Round and round the white cottages, in the hollow between two hills, were seen the fields of flax, long waves of delicate green, with drifts of blue blossoms upon the surface. On the top of one of the sloping hills that guarded the valley

stood a forlorn old windmill. The ground round about it was barren and rocky, and one or two stunted, blighted trees stood near it, with a look as if they would like to run away, but could not. People said the old brown mill was haunted; and the valley children would cling to one another when, sometimes in the twilight on windy evenings, they saw the crazy old sails of the mill beginning to turn on the height, like four gray ghosts circling through the darkening air.

It happened that one year something went wrong with the growth of the flax, and very little of it was good for use. Poverty, in consequence, fell upon the valley; and Floreen's mother, being a widow, was one of those who suffered from the failure most severely.

One day, Floreen, on her way from school, was spoken to by a stranger travelling through the country, who stroked her long hair, and said, "You are a real little child of the valley, with all this flaxen

hair." And then he gave her some sugar-plums and went on his way. Floreen went home to her mother with the sugar-plums. They were not much in the way of food, but still they were something to eat. The stranger's words kept ringing in her ears, and she cried out at last, "Oh, mother, how I wish my head would grow real flax, and then you might not be so hungry!" Her mother smiled, and called her a little goose, and then went on trying to make soup out of an onion and a little salt.

That evening Floreen was wandering about alone, as she was fond of doing, for she had a very inquiring mind, and often wished to ramble farther away than the other children would venture. She was not much afraid of anything, and often laughed at her little friends for being afraid of the windmill. How it happened she never knew; but before she had begun to think she was near the top of the hill, she suddenly found herself quite close to the mill.

"I shall just have time to go in and see what sort of a place it is inside," she said to herself, "and then I shall go home." And in she walked, just as a breeze began to blow, setting the old sails creaking and groaning and going round in the air above her head.

She was now in a strange brown chamber, where it was almost quite dark, and where stood some queer-looking machinery.

"Oh, dear," said Floreen to herself, "I wonder if this is the sort of mill where the flax is spun. How I wish all this useless yellow hair could be spun into flax to make money for mother!"

Hardly had she spoken the words when she felt her hair seized from behind, and caught into the machinery.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Floreen, as the machinery tugged at her hair, and worked away with many a wheezy groan. But her hair did not come out by the roots, as she quite expected it was going to do. It only grew longer and longer, and thicker and

thicker as it was pulled ; and now the machinery went so fast that Floreen was quite bewildered, and scarcely knew what was happening, till suddenly the wheels stopped with a prodigious groan, and the little girl found herself standing beside a huge heap of the most lovely, silky flax, glittering as no flax ever did before, quivering with yellow light on the earthen floor of the old mill.

You may imagine how astonished Floreen was at such a sight, and she was even more delighted than surprised. She gathered up as much of the flax as she could carry in her skirts, and hastened down the hill to her home. Her mother was sitting crying at the fire when Floreen went in, and started up, uttering cries of wonder when the little girl emptied her lapful of flax upon the floor. When Floreen told her story, the poor woman thought her child had gone mad, and gave her a dose of bitter medicine, and put her to bed.

In the morning, however, Floreen still

persisted that she was not ill, and had told the truth; but not till they had gone to the mill and fetched the rest of the flax would the mother believe that the beautiful, glittering flax was all spun out of her little girl's hair. And no wonder, seeing that Floreen's hair was not one inch shorter for all that had been taken off it.

Well, the next day the mother said, "I must go away and sell this flax, and you, Floreen, must take care of the house till I come back." And away she went with a basket full of the flax on her arm, and travelled night and day into a very distant country. On her way she met a horseman galloping along with a very anxious countenance. He was thinking so deeply that he nearly rode over Floreen's mother, who was walking along also lost in thought, wondering if she should get a good price for her flax.

"Hallo!" cried the horseman. "Excuse me; but I am on a difficult errand for my master, Prince Featherpate. I am search-

ing for the most beautiful flax in the world, for of this his wedding clothes must be made. I am tired searching, and nothing I can get will please him."

"I have flax for sale," said Floreen's mother, opening her basket.

The rays of brightness that shot out of the basket made the horseman blink.

"This is right good," he said joyfully. "If it does not please him, I will try no more!"

He took a large parcel of the flax, placed it behind him on the saddle, and then he put spurs to his horse and clattered away; and Floreen's mother continued her journey.

About noon that day she arrived at a beautiful city, where the houses were built of white marble, and orange-trees were growing all down the streets. Floreen's mother went into the market-place, and taking her stand among the stalls, opened her basket.

"Fine flax," cried she, with all her might. "Who will come and buy my fine flax?"

Several people stopped and looked into the basket, and each one as he did so started, and taking the flax in his fingers, felt it, stared at it, and then looked strangely at the woman who had it for sale. When they went on, others came up, and stood shaking their heads together, and looking askance at Floreen's mother.

Just then a bellman went through the town, crying out, "A hundred pounds reward to any one who will find the thief who has stolen the Princess Clarindabella's hair!"

"How very strange!" thought Floreen's mother. "How could any one steal a princess's hair?"

She had hardly made this reflection to herself when twelve tall policemen came up to her, six of whom seized her basket of flax, while the other six took possession of the poor creature herself, and marched her off between them to jail.

While she sat crying in her prison, and thinking about her poor little girl at home,

the basket of flax was carried in triumph to the king's palace, a herald riding before it, and proclaiming that the Princess Clarindabella's hair had been found.

Now, some time before, the Princess Clarindabella had had the most beautiful head of golden hair ever seen, and the prince of a neighboring country had asked her in marriage. All preparations were being made for the wedding, when, lo and behold, the princess's hair began to fall off, and after a few weeks she was left without a single hair on her head. She was in a dreadful state of annoyance about this, and all the old women about the court declared that some wicked, envious person had bewitched the princess's hair off her head. Clarindabella vowed she would not be married without her hair; everything was at a stand-still, and people were sent out all over the world to discover the sacrilegious wretch who had dared to make away with the royal ringlets.

When, therefore, the basket of golden

flax, or hair, whichever you please to call it, was taken from Floreen's mother and brought to the palace, all the ladies of the court jumped for joy, and had no doubt that the princess's runaway tresses had been found. The question now was, however, how to make the hair resume its place on her Royal Highness's head. The court ladies tried gum and paste and even glue, but all was no use. The hairs would not stick on. The court physician was sent for, and even he could devise no better plan than to get a wig made of the hair, with which the princess could cover her little bare poll.

The wig was made, and the princess put it on. It was voted very pretty and very becoming, and the only drawback was in the enormous length of the glittering locks, which measured seven or eight yards upon the floor. Clarindabella did not know whether to be most pleased at the length of her curls, or annoyed at the inconvenience they caused her; for after she

had ascended the royal staircase they were sometimes found entangled in the lowest balustrade of the stairs, or some one was treading on them down in the hall. This was an undignified as well as an inconvenient position for a princess to be placed in; and at last, after several state councils had been held on the subject, it was resolved that six small pages, in costumes of cloth of gold, should at once be provided to carry the princess's hair after her wherever she went.

No sooner said than done; and at last by night-time the princess was found to be quite satisfied with her head-gear. When she went to bed, the wig was taken off and hung on a peg in her room, opposite her bed, and looking at it complacently, she fell asleep. In the middle of the night, however, she wakened with a great shock, and a brilliant light on her eyes, and there she saw the wig all in a blaze of fire, as she thought at first; but by and by she perceived that it was not on fire, only

shining with a most astonishing radiance that poured out of it in a stream all over the wall and floor. And strangest of all, about twenty little green and red goblins were dancing in the light with all their might, capering on the floor, and sliding up and down the shining hairs, with peals of elfish laughter. And they were singing songs like this : —

“The greatest fun
Under the sun,
Is to see the flax that the old mill spun
Out of the hair on Floreen’s head,
Made in a wig,
Hung on a peg,
While Clarindabella lies snug in bed !”

Clarindaballa sat up in bed and stared wildly, and then, getting too much frightened to look any longer, she buried herself under the clothes, and saw nothing more till the morning dawned. The next day she told her mother, the queen, that she would not wear the wig any longer, and described the bright light and the goblins, and the terror she had endured in the

night-time. The queen thought she was getting ill of a fever, locked up the wig out of her sight, put her to bed, and sent for the court physician. She also sent word to Prince Featherpate that the wedding must be put off, as the Princess Clarindabella had been taken suddenly ill.

The news reached Prince Featherpate just as he was about to try on his wedding clothes, which (as we know who are in the secret) were made, like the princess's wig, all out of the flax spun by the old fairy wind-mill, and which was, in reality, Floreen's golden hair. His army of waiting-men had to stand back while he read the message from the queen. It affected him very deeply; but as soon as he had shed a few tears over the illness of his dear Clarindabella, he allowed himself to be persuaded that she would soon be quite well again, and proceeded with the trying-on of his clothes. They were made of what appeared to be certainly the most beautiful fabric in the whole world. Every hair of

Floreen's was a golden thread, and woven up together they formed a heavy cloth of gold, which was exactly suitable for the wedding robes of a prince. The robes were a loose gown, and a long mantle which swept the floor, and was to be upheld by pages, like the hair of the princess's wig. Underneath these stiff and splendid robes the prince wore tight garments of the most delicate azure velvet. His cap was crusted with pearls and crowned with long white feathers. The rings which he wore on his fingers alone might have bought dinner for a thousand starving families.

When the robes had been pronounced perfect, and the poor weavers who had woven the wonderful cloth had been paid twopence-halfpenny each for their labor, the royal wedding garments were hung up on the wall, and the prince went to bed.

What was his horror, however, when he wakened in the night, to see the room filled with an extraordinary light, and his golden

robes walking about the place with no one at all inside them, but with six goblin pages in royal livery holding up the train of the mantle. And as the clothes strutted along, the goblins marched after them, peals of uncanny laughter were heard, and the following words were sung:—

“ March up and down,
O golden gown,
As puffed with pride
As though Prince Featherpate walked inside! ”

“Heaven and earth!” muttered the prince, “what audacious little imps!” But he had to hold his tongue and listen to another song:—

“ His Highness fattens and thrives
On the ebbing blood of poor men's lives,
And the scalding tears of their daughters and wives,
And we goblins think it is hardly fair
That a prince should have such costly wear,
As robes woven out of a poor maid's golden hair! ”

The prince snatched his sword and leaped out of bed, and the next moment was standing in the middle of his chamber in the moonshine, with his wedding clothes

hanging innocently on the wall before him, and nothing left of the strange scene he had witnessed but some elfin laughter gurgling in a corner. He poked at this laughter with his sword as if it had been a rat, and tried to stab it ; but it escaped him, and pealed about his ears like a chime of fairy bells. Choking with rage, he went back to bed, and the next day declared that his wedding clothes were bewitched, and that nothing would ever induce him to put them on again. His ministers shook their heads, said it was well the wedding had been already deferred, and hoped his Highness's little fit of delirium would have time to work off before he was called upon to fulfil his engagement.

As day followed day, and both Clarinda-bella and Featherpate remained obstinate, their several ministers agreed to meet in secret and hold a council as to the best means of bringing this unruly though royal young couple to their senses. It was resolved that they should be permitted to

get married without either golden robes or golden wig, if to this they would only consent. As they were tired of so long a separation as they had now endured, they agreed to the plan; for Featherpate hated the very sight of a long train, and Clarindabella declared she was now satisfied to be bald to the end of her days.

A day for the royal marriage was announced; and on the eventful morning, the court and all the company of wedding guests assembled in the state chambers of the palace. There was great tittering and laughing among the less well-bred of the crowd at the expectation of seeing a royal bride married without a single hair on her head, and a royal bridegroom in tight garments like an acrobat. The queen, Clarindabella's mother, could not bear to hear of it; and at the last moment, when they were just descending the stairs to join the company, she led the youthful pair into a dressing-room, and implored them to attire themselves in a fitting and desirable man-

ner. She had robes and wig at hand, and before they could remonstrate had popped each on the wearer for whom it had been intended. Taken quite by surprise, and looking in the glass, the resolution of the young pair gave way, and they acknowledged that they looked better than they had done without their respective coverings. Clarindabella had been feeling a little annoyed at the thought of marrying such a knitting-needle of a prince, and Featherpate had been musing involuntarily on the absurdity of his standing at the altar with a princess who had a head like a billiard ball. Now, therefore, they smiled at each other and agreed to obey the queen, who, greatly delighted, took a hand of each, and introduced them to the astonished company.

All now went well. The chapel was filled with the whole court; the royal pair stood at the altar, when suddenly, just as the last word had been said, and the ring had been put on Clarindabella's finger,

twelve little red and green goblins were seen walking up the church aisle, and ascending the steps. They pushed aside the pages that upheld the prince's train and the princess's hair, and took their places. A few moments afterward they gave train and hair a gentle shake, whereupon the golden robes at once left Featherpate's back, and the golden wig instantly quitted Clarindabella's head, leaving the pair exposed to the laughter of the crowd, while robes and wig marched solemnly down the church aisle, followed by the goblins, and disappeared suddenly through the door.

When Clarindabella and Featherpate had both fainted, and both been restored, when all the confusion had been calmed down, and the people who had laughed had been banished from the court, a council was held as to what was the best means of penetrating so strange a mystery. It was suggested that an investigation should be made into the circumstances of the purchase of materials for the robes and wig ;

and the police who had arrested Floreen's mother, and the horseman who had bought her flax upon the road, were both summoned before the commission. When they had told their stories, an order was instantly given for the release of Floreen's mother, and she was marched to the palace by a regiment of soldiers.

Then it was that, in the presence of the queen, the prince and princess, and the whole court, she told her little story of poverty and hunger, and of her little girl's devotion, and her extraordinary adventure at the mill. She wept bitterly as she declared that the beautiful flax was all spun out of her little Floreen's hair, and had never belonged to the Princess Clarindabella at all.

"My poor little daughter!" she said; "God knows whether I shall find her alive when I go back after my long imprisonment."

When the poor woman ceased, it was seen that the queen was using her pocket-

handkerchief, and, of course, immediately the whole court began to use its pocket-handkerchiefs.

“We have too long neglected the poor people of this distant valley,” said the queen, royally. “I will sell one of my best pairs of slippers instantly, and go and visit them, and make them comfortable until good times return to them.”

The court cheered loudly.

“And you and your little Floreen shall be my especial care,” she said to the poor woman. “You shall stay with me and be one of my women, if you please; and your daughter Floreen shall be the princess’s confidential maid.”

The poor woman fell on her face and kissed the queen’s hands; and, lo and behold, while they were speaking, the Princess Clarindabella’s hair began to grow. It grew, after that, at the rate of an inch in a quarter of an hour; and before the day was over, it was as long as even a princess could wish it.



Marianna; or, the Fairy Child.

ONCE upon a time, a long while ago, there was a little child called Marianna.

Now Marianna lived with an old gypsy woman who was said to be her grandmother, and their dwelling was a small hut on the border of a great forest.

There was no other house near, nor habitation of any kind. The nearest village was miles and miles away; only just beneath the brow of the hill, which hid the far-off landscape from view, was a rude little cell where dwelt the holy hermit Dominicus.

Marianna was a very fair child with long golden hair, and blue eyes which always seemed full of pure, bright, happy thoughts. It had been said she was a stolen child, so fair and unlike a gypsy was she; but it was never known who she was nor where she had come from.

But very lovely was she in her short brown skirt and tight blue bodice, with her golden hair floating away in the wind. Yet there was no one to tell her she was pretty, and Marianna never knew what it was to be vain.

She was a good child, too, but she did not know it, nor yet about Him who had made this world of beauty. So she sported with the flowers, and sang her little songs, and lived in sweet obedience to the strange old woman who called her grandchild. And so Marianna grew till she was seven years old.

One day little Marianna ran out to play as usual on the borders of the forest. It was the sweet spring-tide, and she gath-

ered violets and blue-bells, and made a wreath for her hair. When she looked up she saw an old man slowly drawing near ; his eyes were bent upon his book, but his calm, noble face riveted the child's attention.

When he saw Marianna looking up at him with childlike simplicity and reverence, he stood still.

"What is thy name, little maid?" said he.

"My name is Marianna," she replied in a soft, timid voice, and with wonder-speaking eyes.

"The prayers of little children are very pleasing to the great and good God. Pray for me, Marianna."

And the stranger passed on his way.

Marianna did not move. The words, and the voice, and the sweet holy smile had penetrated her young heart. She knew not the meaning of those words, but her soul seemed to follow the retreating form of the stranger, and when

she could see him no longer she burst into tears.

“O great and good God!” exclaimed she, “teach me to pray, that I may pray for him!”

And when the prayer had passed her lips, though she knew not that it was a prayer, her tears dried up, and an untold joy filled the soul of the little maiden.

And the child's life was changed. The flowers and the sunshine no longer attracted her eyes. Her soul had awakened, and it yearned for something beyond. For in her heart had welled up the fountains of a child's holy love.

But she had no one to speak to, and so she spoke to the flowers, and said,—

“Dear little flowers, who *is* the great God, that I may go to him, and what must I do that I may pray to him?”

And the flowers looked up to the sky, and opened their petals; but their language she did not understand.

Then she called to the birds, and said,—

“Dear birds, where is the great God, that I may find him, and what is it I must do that I may pray to him?”

And the birds fluttered from bough to bough, and flapped their wings joyously, and they carolled forth a glad song amidst the shady foliage of the woods. But the meaning of their language Marianna did not understand.

Then she turned to the sunshine, and asked it the same question.

And the sunshine came out from behind a dark cloud and decked it with gold, and it flooded all the landscape with heavenly glory.

But Marianna could not understand; and her little heart fluttered plaintively, while a sigh escaped her lips.

“O stranger dear, come back! Come back and teach me where I shall find God, that I may go to him and learn how to pray!”

And the light in her eyes grew brighter and her step grew quicker, and day by

day she sat on her bed of moss looking far into the valley, waiting until the old man should come again. Every day she gathered a knot of sweet violets, that she might give them to him as an offering of her childish love.

So the days went by, and at last he came. She sat there with her violets in her hand, but her head had fallen on its mossy pillow, and she was asleep.

The holy hermit Dominicus had come out for his evening meditation, when he saw the child as she lay sleeping in the moss.

He stopped, and looked tenderly upon her. "Beautiful childhood!" he whispered softly, "more beautiful still the unstained soul within! Sweet little one, how God must love thee!"

Then he knelt down, and prayed that his own heart might be found at last as innocent and guileless as the child's. But the violets he took from her little hand, and placed them in his bosom.

And when Marianna awoke from her sleep the moon had arisen, and her flowers were gone.

“Oh, that I could find him!” said the child, and wept.

For the days had come and gone, and the summer sun now shone; but Marianna had never yet had her question answered. Then a sudden thought broke in upon her. She dried her tears as she rose, looked round timidly, and set forth to seek the stranger. “I will go,” said she, “and find *him* first, and he will tell me what I must do.”

So she wandered on and on till her feet were weary, but she heeded not. The sun poured his hot rays upon her from his seat high in the heavens, but she feared them not. On, on she went, towards the brow of the hill, seeking the only one who could teach her how the wants of her young heart were to be satisfied.

But the little feet at last refused to carry her any farther, and Marianna now

felt that she had lost her way. She sat down, and clasping her hands across her breast, she murmured again, "O great and good God, teach me to pray!"

As she spoke she raised her eyes, and saw the holy old man whom she had searched for approaching. He smiled, as she had seen him do before, and stood before her.

"What ails thee, Marianna?" said he, "and what has brought thee so far from home?"

"Oh, tell me!" she cried, lifting up her hands to him, the tears streaming down her face, — "tell me where I may find him!"

"Whom seekest thou, my child?"

"The great and good God, that I may pray to him."

The holy man paused in silent wonder; then, laying his hands upon her head, he said slowly and softly, —

"Child, he is everywhere; but he loves best to dwell in hearts that love him.

Look for him *there* and you will find him !”

So Marianna returned to her cottage home, and was happy, for the stranger had spoken sweet words, albeit she understood them not.

She played amongst the birds and the flowers, and a new beauty seemed over all.

“Oh, sweet little flowers,” cried she, “the great and good God loves you, for he is with you everywhere. It is he that makes you beautiful and sweet. Oh, that I were a flower, that I might be as happy as you !”

And the little flowers moved more gayly, and shed their perfume more abundantly ; and thus they spoke all day long to the child of him who dwelt amongst them, unseen by mortal eye.

“Oh, little birds,” she said, “the great and good God loves you ! It is he who fills your hearts with joy and your throats with song. Oh, that I too were a bird, that I might sing to him !”

And the birds carolled louder, and flew from branch to branch in the shady forest, making it echo with their song. And so they spoke all day long to the child of him who dwelt amongst them, unseen by mortal eye.

“O blessed light,” cried she, holding out her hands as the glorious sun set in the west, “the great and good God loves you! It is he who kindled your burning fires, and stretches out your white beams till all creation sparkles with your brightness. Oh, that I were a sunbeam, that I too might shine so near him, and might praise him!”

And a bright glory flooded the golden west. It reached out to the fair child, encircling her with its arms of beauty, as her hair fell round her face like a crown of gold in the light which played upon her.

Thus from morning till eve the flowers, and the birds, and the rays of the sun spoke to Marianna of him who lives amongst them unseen by eye of man.

When Marianna arose in the morning she lifted up her hands and said :

“O great and good God, who art everywhere, but chiefly in the hearts of those that love thee, take me to the heart that loves thee best, that I may see thee and learn to pray.”

Then she dressed herself and arranged in order her grandmother's cabin; and once again she wandered forth towards the valley where dwelt the holy hermit.

“For,” said she, “if I am near him I shall be near God; for *he* loves the great and good God, and God dwells in his heart. Oh, that I could be a fairy child, that I might live with his book, in his dress, and so be near his heart! Then should I be near God, and learn to pray.”

The day was sultry, and her little feet ached; but still the child went on till she came to the mossy bank where she had slept before.

So she sat down to rest; and as she sat there stood before her a beautiful lady,

more dazzling than the sun and more lovely than the moon, all dressed in snowy white, with a crown of pure pearls upon her brow.

And the Vision was so bright and tender that the child closed her eyes for very sweetness, and a sense of perfect rest. But the Vision lifted her hands graciously over the little golden head, and blessed her and vanished.

When Marianna awoke she found herself no longer a sprightly little girl, able to trip over the ground from morning till night, but the smallest, tiniest little maiden that ever was seen.

Close by her side sat the holy hermit; his eyes were bent upon his book, and his lips whispered words which, although she understood them not, sounded strangely sweet to her ears.

She no longer feared him as before; but climbing on to his dress, she waited patiently till the prayers were ended and the book was closed.

Then the hermit looked upon her with a smile ; he held out his hand, and she climbed upon it. Her voice was soft and clear, and she said,—

“Let me go with you.”

“Sweet little one,” he answered, “how like you are unto Marianna. Since you so resemble her, I will take you ; but there is nothing for little children in my cell, nor do I know where you can live.”

But Marianna pleaded, “Let me be with your book, and I shall be near to God.”

“You shall come,” said he, “and you shall sometimes be with the book, for it is a holy book, and if you could read it, it would teach you about God.”

Then the holy man arose, and placing his breviary within the folds of his cloak and Marianna beside it, he returned straightway to his dwelling in the valley.

Thus Marianna’s first wish was granted.

She nestled down close to the precious book, and listened to the soft beating of

the heart against which it lay; and she knew she was very near to God.

And again she cried, "O great and good God, whom I cannot see, but who art so very near me, teach me to love Thee, that I too may hold Thee in my heart!"

Then it seemed to the child as though a veil was withdrawn from before her eyes, and that she could see a picture unfolding itself before her. At first it was in a mist, but it grew clearer and brighter the longer she gazed.

It was as though she saw a chamber, the walls of which were hung with golden tapestry, woven into pictures, which she could not understand. But in the midst of them was a cross of pure light, and on it hung the figure of the most beautiful man that could be conceived. Rays of light from the figure filled the little chamber, and by this light she saw everything as it were in the brightness of day.

"O God," whispered the child, "teach me to love Thee!"

Marianna gazed and gazed until her heart overflowed : her eye never tired of gazing, nor her heart of longing.

“ O God,” she cried again, “ who art Thou? Teach me to love Thee, that I may be ever near Thee.”

The hermit was kneeling in his cell.

And Marianna saw the golden cross grow brighter and brighter, and the light flashed from it with such brilliance that all the other pictures became dim and vanished.

Then the child stretched out her hands to grasp the cross, but a voice whispered softly, “ Not yet.”

The hermit arose from his prayer, and, taking his breviary, he bethought of her whom he had taken for a fairy child. He gathered a little moss from the brookside, and forming over the bed he had made for her a little shelter of twigs and leaves, he laid her gently upon it, for she had fallen asleep.

And as he did so the vision passed from her sight.

Now the old man built her a little cell, and planted lilies and violets round about it; but when he went abroad he placed her in the fold of his cloak, according to her wish.

So each day she saw, unknown to him, the figure of the Crucified, who lived within his heart, and those rays of light fell upon her soul, drawing her to the pierced side, and filling her with untold joy.

She longed to enter the chamber, and sought about for some vacant spot within it, but there was none. Every corner was filled with images so bright and glorious, and with pictures so love-inspiring, that she felt that her wish was a hopeless one.

There was no place in that human heart even for her, the humble little Marianna.

“Shall I *never* clasp that golden cross, or kiss the feet of Him who hangs upon it? O God, O wondrous God, how beautiful Thou art! O bid me come near Thee, that I may love Thee as they do who have Thee in their hearts!” And the child

wept tears of joy and grief, for though she saw yet she possessed not.

One day the holy man returned to his cell in deep meditation. The child still gazed on the vision which she saw within his heart, and gradually it melted away and was replaced by another. He had prostrated himself before the crucifix in his cell, forgetting to remove his cloak, in the folds of which the child knelt, looking and longing.

For the chamber into which she gazed became dim, and through the transparent mist which floated in the light of the Crucified a picture unfolded itself before her.

It was a garden. Lovely flowers and blossoming trees were there — trees, too, that bore golden fruit — and birds, and running brooks ; but amidst it all was a light so dazzling, so penetrating, that it seemed to burn all without consuming anything, and in the very midst of the light were a glorious man and woman. It was not the light of the Crucified — for it was

in this light that she saw the other — but another. It grew into a circle, into which other circles wove themselves, and together they all formed into a triangle, which seemed at once the frame and the centre of the picture.

This picture flashed, and grew more and more distinct as she looked upon it, when suddenly it was replaced by a darkness and a horror, and she saw a serpent stealing round the picture frame, with its glittering false eye fixed on the woman. And it passed ; but the garden was no more, but a waste, dreary and dark ; and a weeping woman knelt at the feet of the Crucified.

Then the form of the woman passed away, and she saw the waves of a great sea raging in the midst of a storm, and a little boat tossing upon it. But the light from the cross guided it until the tempest was passed, and then the picture passed too, and nothing remained but the golden cross and the Crucified.

But a glorious woman stood beneath it,

the same whom once before Marianna had seen, and who had smiled upon her and blessed her. She stood there in her radiant beauty, and her foot was on the serpent's head.

Thus hours had passed, and still Marianna, with eye untired and soul unsatiated, gazed on the form of him who drew her to his heart in silent, suffering love.

"Oh, that I could know thee, thou wonderful God ! Oh, that I might love thee and possess thee, as they do who love thee most."

But of all this the hermit knew nothing, for Marianna spoke not aloud : it was her heart that cried silently to God.

"Little one," said the holy man one day, "are you not weary ?"

"How can I be weary when I am so near to God ?" she replied.

"But you cannot know God," he said. "If you were the real Marianna I could teach you, and you should be baptized."

"Teach me," said the plaintive little

voice, "teach me as if I were the real Marianna. Oh, teach me what it is to be baptized!"

"It is to be made the very child of the great and good God."

"And then may I touch the golden cross? Oh, let me baptized!"

"What do you mean by the golden cross, little one?"

Then the child told him all that she had seen.

The holy man praised God exceedingly, for he thought that she had seen a vision, not that she had looked into his own soul.

"I will teach you, little one," said he; "and you shall be God's child if he wills it, but I know not if it be so."

Then the child raised her hands, as she was wont to do, and exclaimed, —

"O great and good God, shining down from the golden cross, who art everywhere, but chiefly in the hearts of those who love thee, let me be taught to know thee, that even I, the little one, may be thy child,

and may have a heart which loves thee, in which thou mayest dwell and never leave me!"

Thereupon the holy hermit praised God and said,—

"Be it so, my child. The holy drops shall be poured upon thee, and thou shalt be his child forever."

And the hermit taught her to call him father.

"Father," she said to him one day, "when the holy drops shall have fallen on my head, will the great and good God let me be with him always?"

"Whilst thou lovest him above all things, he will be in thy heart, and will never leave it."

"And shall I see him as he is?"

"Not yet."

Then Marianna went into her cell, and she said, "O great and good God, shining from the golden cross, give me a heart to love thee above all things; and when the holy drops fall upon me, let me

see thee as thou art and never leave thee."

The child prayed thus because the image of the Crucified lived in her memory ; and she spoke to it all day long of her love and of her longing.

Meanwhile the holy man taught her by little and little, and so she learned the holy faith. The love of God, too, grew in her heart stronger and stronger, and she waited for the blessed time when she should be united to God. But she was silent, for she knew not in what words to speak of her love.

And the child found a voice at length, and she began to speak to all the things which she saw around her.

"O all ye lovely things of God," she cried, "love him and praise him with me, for he is my father, and I am to be his own forever !

"O ye little birds, come and sing to God, and praise him with me ; for he is my father, and I am to be his own child forever !

“O ye beautiful flowers, open your leaves and breathe forth sweet odors, and praise God with me ; for he is my father, and I am to be his child forever !

“O thou glorious light, shining down from heaven upon all that God has made, come and praise him with me ; for he is my father, and he will show the light of his countenance upon me forever !

“O ye shady trees of the forest, wave your branches, and whisper God’s praises with me ; for he is my father, and I am to be his child forever !

“O thou little brook of running waters, murmuring softly over thy bed of stones, come and praise the great and good God with me ; for he is my father, and I am to be his child forever !”

And all day long, as the maiden sat in her mossy cell or walked forth in the wood, she spoke of her joy to the only companions she had ; and thus the summer passed quickly away.

Day by day, when evening came, Mari-

anna went forth with the holy hermit, and lived in the wondrous thoughts which filled his heart during long hours of meditation and prayer. The pictures which she saw in his heart changed as his thoughts changed; but the calm brightness was always the same, and the cross shone ever more and more, now making the objects around it clear, now absorbing them into itself, but ever reigning supreme in the midst, surrounded by a calm glory which made the child's heart glow like fire. As his instructions sank into her mind, so did these images have a meaning for her, and become the food of her soul; and all the day she longed for evening to come that she might gaze upon them again.

And thus passed the autumn and the winter, and the sweet spring-time came, when one day the holy man said to her,—

“Little one, I am going on a long journey.”

The child replied, “I will go with you.”

“Be it so,” answered the hermit, “for the time is come.”

So the child went to her cell, and bade farewell to the home she loved and to the companions of her solitude, saying,—

“The great and good God hath called, and I must go. My Father hath spoken, and I can stay no longer.

“Oh, ye beautiful creatures, amongst whom he dwelleth, unseen by mortal eye, farewell! Oh, lovely works of his hands, I shall see you no more!

“But I shall go to him, and he will come to me; I shall love him forever and forever, for he loveth me, and I shall never cease to be his child.

“Oh, ye birds and flowers and trees, sunshine and clouds, ye little brooks and mossy banks, continue to praise him exceedingly with me; for he hath called me, and I am going to live in his heart, and to be with him forever!”

Thus did the child sing in the gladness of her soul, and when the early morning

broke, the holy solitary placed her within the fold of his cloak and departed.

But the vision had changed which she saw in his heart, and the child gazed with wonder and awe into the bright chamber.

For in the midst of it was a throne of living fire, and in the midst of the throne a crystal brighter than ten thousand diamonds, and in the midst of the crystal a living light, brighter than all created light, more beautiful than all created gems. And the glory flashed all through the sanctuary, and she could feel the deep throbbing of a heart on fire with the love of God.

The child had now no words; her soul was wrapt in worship, in one ceaseless act of love. How long the vision lasted she knew not: the weary feet of the solitary might have told, but they kept it secret even from himself, and late in the evening he knelt before the altar, in a little chapel far away, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

And now, within the very midst of the

crystal light which seemed to pierce through her heart of hearts, the golden cross appeared, and He who hung upon it seemed to hold out his hands towards her, and to point to his wounded side; showing her the heart most dear to God himself.

The child had no words to speak: her worship was one thrilling act of burning love.

She saw — but it was outside her. She saw — but as yet she possessed not.

* * * * *

And now the aged solitary has placed her on the edge of the marble baptismal font. The priest and the acolytes stand by.

The holy drops have fallen on her head, and the child Marianna stands by her guardian in her natural form and grace. But she heeds not, she scarcely knows the outward change.

The inner change! she knows it! Her arms are stretched towards the altar, and with longing, eager eyes she exclaims, —

“O great God, O Father of all, come into my heart, for I love thee! Be in me as thou art in those who love thee best: O let me come to thee, and never more leave thee!”

They led her to the steps of the altar: she kneels, and with one sob of ecstatic joy her stainless soul springs from its prison-house. It has fled to the wounded side of Him whose heart alone could be her resting-place, and has found its home in the abyss of the perfect love of God.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”





LOTTIE DAUBRY.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. BOGY.

ON a bright but cold winter's day the Tuileries Gardens in Paris were thronged with groups of children, who amused themselves at all sorts of games.

Looking on with a disdainful air was Lottie Daubry, a child of about seven years old. She was rather conspicuous from the fact of her being dressed entirely in white. Even her shoes were of that color. She was under the charge of an English governess, and was accompanied by a brother of thirteen and a sister of

eleven years old, both pleasant, intelligent-looking children, elegantly attired.

Just as Raoul, her brother, was about to join a group of boys who represented an army on the eve of battle, and while he was commending to the care of Martha, his elder sister, his gloves, his little cane, and other articles, a livery servant who had been looking about the gardens with a perturbed air touched him on the shoulder.

“Master Raoul, young ladies, you must come home directly; your papa is ill.”

When the children, thus recalled in haste, reached their luxurious home they found all in confusion; and their step-mother, taking them in her arms, sobbed out:

“Darlings, you have no longer a father!”

A month passed away, and the poor children had time to realize the terrible change in their circumstances. Their father was a stockbroker; and the anxiety concerning his affairs, followed by his com-

plete ruin, had brought about the shock which caused his sudden death. Their stepmother was in very delicate health, and by her husband's failure had become totally dependent on her widowed mother, the possessor of a large fortune and a hard heart.

Madame Marreau despatched her invalid daughter to Mentone, wrote to the grandfather of the children to insist on his taking charge of them, and superintended the sale of the costly furniture, with which Monsieur Daubry's house was filled.

The day before the final dismantling of the house had arrived, the three children were together. Raoul and Martha were sitting near the window, with wistful faces and watchful eyes ; but Lottie, still dressed in white, and with a large doll in her arms, was playing about the room. Presently she came to her sister, and asked where was Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth is gone," said Martha sadly.

"It is Mrs Bogy who sent her away!"

cried the child, using the nick-name which she had bestowed upon Madame Marreau.

"Yes, it is Mrs. Bogy."

"Is she our mistress, then?" continued Lottie.

"Yes," said Raoul gravely.

"But why, Raoul; why is she our mistress?"

"Because she is mamma's mother."

"Then she is our grandmother."

"No, Lottie; you know very well our own mamma is dead a long time ago."

"Oh, yes, when I was a baby. Our own mamma is that pretty blue lady in the drawing-room; this one is our mamma left over."

"Our stepmother," said Raoul. How silly you are, Lottie!"

"Well, but we like our present mamma, and she always calls us her children."

"Yes," said Raoul, with a deep sigh; "but grandpapa is our guardian, and mamma cannot take us. She cried very much when she left Paris, and she said to me:

‘If the good God cures me, I will come back to you, dear children.’ ”

“Dear little mamma,” said Lottie, brushing away her tears. “If I knew where the good God lived, I would go and ask him to cure her. I want her back, and that horrid Mrs. Bogy to go away. Yesterday she sent off Joseph; to-day, Elizabeth. Does she wish us to have no servants at all?”

“Hush, Lottie,” said Raoul and Martha together; “here she is!”

Madame Marreau now entered, accompanied by two gentlemen to whom she was talking eagerly.

“Could you really believe it,” said she. “She wanted to take charge of these children, who have not got a farthing!”

“How is your daughter?” said one of the gentlemen. “Has she left Paris?”

“Yes. She was so ill she could not resist me. But I am at my wits’ end. This grandfather of theirs is buried in the country, and does not answer my letter, and I must give up this house to-morrow;

so I have sent for a good woman who has been nurse to these children, and who keeps a little shop in Vaugirard. I hope she will take charge of them for a little while. Now then, Miss Curious, what are you doing there?"

Lottie was standing by, listening to every word, with cheeks red as fire.

"I am scolding my doll," she said. "She is wicked;" and with all the strength of her little hands she beat the unfortunate doll, exclaiming, "Wicked, wicked, wicked Mrs. Bogy!"

"It is you who are wicked," said Madame Marreau; and she added in a lower voice to the gentlemen, "She is a perfect little imp; the others are good enough, but she is really an imp." And Lottie went about the room striking her doll, and saying, —

"Wicked, wicked, wicked Bogy!"

Madame Marreau now left the room with the gentlemen, and returned in about a quarter of an hour accompanied by a

stout, good-humored-looking woman, into whose arms the three children all rushed, exclaiming, —

“O mamma Goodheart, mamma Goodheart!”

It was their term of endearment for their old nurse.

“Raoul and Martha,” said Madame Marreau, “to-morrow you must quit this house. Which do you like the best — to stay with your nurse while waiting for your grandfather’s letter, or to go to school?”

“We would much rather go with nurse,” replied the children.

“Poor darlings, poor darlings!” said Madame Nouft. “Then to-morrow at three o’clock I will come to fetch you. Good-by till then;” and she left the room, followed by Lottie, who attended her to the street-door. “You will bring your doll with you, my treasure.”

“I will bring all my toys,” said Lottie, in a very earnest manner, “but not my doll.”

"Why not, my dear?"

"Because she is dead."

"Oh, how can that be?"

"Yes. The wicked die as well as the good, I think; and she was so wicked I chose her to be dead."





CHAPTER II.

THE WOODEN LEG.

NEXT day at three o'clock the nurse came for the children, who, though they shed some tears at leaving their old home, were delighted to bid Madame Marreau adieu.

Their luggage had been sent on, so their nurse took them to the nearest omnibus. But when Lottie entered that vehicle, and saw therein a poor man in ragged and greasy clothes, she jumped out again, exclaiming, —

“Oh, that horrid carriage, that horrid man !”

The omnibus did not wait, but drove on, and there was a perfect scene before the child would consent to go in the next.

She yielded, however, to Raoul, who declared to her that he stood in her father's place, and would be obeyed. Once *en route*, Lottie's tongue began to wag:

"Did the horses drag about these big houses all day long? When did they get dinner? Did they like the noise?"

At last her own babbling and the noise sent her to sleep.

"Here we are, dear Lottie," said her nurse, as the omnibus stopped; "and there is my husband."

Lottie's eyes fell on an old man in half-military costume, with a smiling face and a wooden leg. She rushed up to him, exclaiming, —

"Good day, Monsieur Pouf!"

"Good-day, Miss Charlotte. I am your humble servant."

The shop of Madame Nouft was for groceries; it jutted out from the house, and on the flat roof was a sort of wide terrace, on which the windows of the first-floor opened. Under this shadow of the

outer wall of the house a seller of hot chestnuts had planted himself.

"Hot chestnuts," cried Lottie joyously ;
"Oh, I'll have plenty !"

"Yes, my darling," said her nurse ;
"but come up now and see your room."

A small room, very plainly furnished, was assigned to Martha and Lottie, and a smaller one still, opening out of this, was for Raoul.

The boxes had arrived, and while nurse and Martha were busy settling matters, Lottie skipped out on the terrace.

After a good look at the surrounding houses, and specially the opposite shop, which was for shoes and boots, and bore the sign of The Golden Shoe, Lottie came back into the room. Nurse was gone, and Raoul and Martha unpacking their goods.

"Don't unpack my things," said Lottie.

"Why not ?" replied Martha.

"Because I am not going to stay here ;"
and then bursting into a fit of rage and

grief, she stamped on the floor, and screamed out, —

“I want to go away ! I want my house ! I can’t stop with poor people ! ”

Her bad temper lasted the whole evening ; she would not be pacified nor suffer herself to be undressed, and finally fell asleep in an armchair, murmuring to herself, “I won’t sleep here. I won’t stay with poor people.”





CHAPTER III.

THE WHITE SHOES.

TIME, however, softened the bitterness of poor Lottie's little heart, all the more that her nurse spoilt her in every possible way. Monsieur Pouf, as she persisted in calling him, became her obedient slave. Most of her time was spent with him on the terrace, where he smoked and she chattered.

"What is the matter, Monsieur Pouf?" said she one day.

"Oh, Miss Lottie, it is the rheumatism in my legs."

"What, in your wooden leg too?"

"No, Miss Charlotte, not in that one."

"What a good thing!" said Lottie.

"Do you often think about your old leg, Monsieur Pouf?"

"No, Miss Lottie. I was sorry to lose it; but I don't think about it any more. And now I will hobble down-stairs, and buy you some chestnuts."

Raoul and Martha were both very much impressed by their father's death and their new responsibilities. They felt they must not be idle.

Raoul, who was fond of drawing, set himself to this occupation; and Martha sewed industriously at his side.

The looked-for letter from grandpapa came not, and the children were anxious.

"Have you bought them?" said Martha one day, as Raoul entered with a parcel.

"Yes, and they were very dear;" and with a sigh the boy showed his sister a pair of small black shoes.

"Had they no white ones?"

"No, indeed, they don't keep them; and they are very much dearer than black ones."

"Lottie will be angry," said Martha;

"she is expecting a new pair of white shoes."

"You know, Martha, we have very little money left. When grandpapa sends for us, we have not got enough for the journey, I fear."

"We must take Lottie's money, then," said Martha.

"Has Lottie any money?"

"Yes, twenty francs in her little blue purse. Papa gave it to her on her birthday; and she never spent it."

"I fear even with that we should not have enough," said Raoul sorrowfully.

"There is nurse," said Martha. "See, nurse, here are the new shoes for Lottie, if only she will put them on; but I know she will be very cross. Her white shoes have holes; she got her feet wet yesterday."

"Oh, that is dreadful, my dear. I'll tell you what we will do. I will creep in, to-night, after she is asleep, take away the white shoes, and put these in their place. They are nice little shoes, and just the fit.

See, let us hide them now, for here she comes."

In danced Lottie from the terrace.

"You like that terrace, then, my Lottie," said nurse. "You amuse yourself there with your old Pouf?"

"Yes, nurse, I like the terrace and the birds; but I don't like your house, nor your rooms, nor your curtains, nor your armchair."

"Nor me, Lottie?"

"Oh, yes, yes; I do love you," said Lottie, giving nurse a hug. "I love you and old Pouf and the man with the chest-nuts."

"I see, I see, little bird, you love all but your cage. You can't forget the pretty gilded one you had. Well, put on your things now, and I will take you all out for a walk."



CHAPTER IV.

THE BLACK SHOES.

THE children being allowed by their nurse to do much as they liked, did not rise at any fixed hour. Martha was always up first, Raoul was not long after her; but Lottie slept as long as she pleased, and even when awake was not too willing to leave her bed; so the next morning, when Pouf brought her breakfast, Miss Lottie was in bed. She took her bread and milk with a very good appetite, and then Martha said :

“Lottie, it is time to get up.”

“Please, Martha, give me my doll’s cradle. I must say good-morning to my child.”

Martha took the cradle, with its muslin curtains lined with pink carefully closed, and put it on Lottie's bed.

"Now kiss your doll and get up, Lottie."

"Yes, yes," said Lottie, arranging herself comfortably in bed.

She opened the curtains, took out the doll, dressed her, and scolded her; then she cried out :

"Martha, give me my scissors. Martha, give me my pincushion. Martha, give me this; Martha bring me that."

Martha brought some things and refused others; but where was the use of refusing Lottie? She only jumped out of bed, ran about in her nightgown, catching up what she had a fancy for, and then running back to bed.

Martha took her behavior very quietly, and Lottie exclaimed several times :

"How very nice you are to-day, Martha!"

By degrees, Lottie's bed became a sort of bazaar; toys and nicknacks were thickly scattered over the quilt and pillows, and

she sat chattering and laughing in the midst of them.

"There is ten o'clock striking," said Martha.

"Oh, is it ten o'clock? I'll get up now. Please, Martha, take away these toys; I can't get up now without breaking them."

Patient Martha cleared the bed.

"Are you not going to say your prayers, Lottie?"

Lottie shook her head.

"You will always forget that I am cross with the good God," she said. "I shall not say my prayers any more till he has given me back papa and mamma, my carriage and my house."

"How silly you are, child!" said Martha, disappearing into Raoul's room.

"She is getting up," whispered Martha to Raoul.

"Oh," said he, smiling; "now the time has come, she will be calling for you."

"And for you, also, Raoul."

"Oh, no; I shan't come in till the end,

like I did about the omnibus. I can't bear having to remind Lottie that papa is dead, and she has to obey me," added the boy sadly. "Hark, Martha, she is calling you."

Martha went in. There was Lottie, half-dressed, her hair tossed about her, holding in her hand one of the little black shoes.

"Martha," she cried, "what are these horrid black shoes?"

"They were bought for you yesterday, at the Golden Shoe-shop."

"For me?" said Lottie, sending the shoe she held into the farthest corner of the room. "I will never put on such shoes. I want my white ones. I *will* know where they are."

"They have holes in them, Lottie. Perhaps nurse will have them mended. Put these on meanwhile."

"Never!" said Lottie, kicking the other shoe away from her. "I will not put them on; and if you won't give me my own shoes, I will not get up at all."

She jumped back into bed, half-dressed as she was, and drew the bed-clothes over her.

Martha went back to her work in Raoul's room, leaving the door ajar; and soon the sound of Lottie's sobs and cries reached them.

"Oh, how unfortunate I am!" sobbed Lottie. "Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Papa is dead, Mrs. Bogy has taken away mamma, and I have been sent to this horrid old house. I have no carriage — Oh, dear! — no arm-chairs — Oh! Oh! Oh! They have taken away my white shoes, and I won't — I won't put on black ones! I will go barefoot, like poor children. Horrid black shoes! How unfortunate I am!"

Raoul and Martha could not help laughing.

"Shall I go and comfort her?" said the latter.

"No," said Raoul, "you would only make her worse. She will soon get tired of bed."

So Raoul went on with his drawing,

and Martha with her work ; and presently they heard Lottie moving about, but without any shoes on.

Then all was still. Martha peeped out. Lottie was not in the room, and the black shoes were thrown among the ashes of the stove.

At this moment nurse came in.

“Well,” said she, “are they on?”

Martha pointed to the stove.

“Oh, the naughty child!” said nurse, taking up the shoes and dusting them with her apron. “But what has she on her feet?”

“I don’t know,” said Martha ; and going to the window, they saw Lottie walking about in her stockings.

It had rained in the night, and the terrace was wet, so Lottie was taking a sort of foot-bath, and her stockings were already wet and dirty.

“Oh, Lottie, Lottie, what are you about?” cried nurse, springing on the terrace. “Do you want to kill yourself?”

She took the child in her arms, bore her indoors, and held her on her knees. Lottie pinched her lips, and gave no sign of repentance.

"Give me clean stockings, Martha," said nurse.

"I will put on clean stockings," said Lottie, "but not those horrid shoes."

"We shall see about that," said nurse, pulling off the wet stockings.

Lottie was quiet until the shoes made their appearance; then she kicked with all her force, screaming out:

"I won't put them on!"

All of a sudden opened the door of Raoul's room, and the young head of the family, with a grave face, made his appearance.

"You are wanted down-stairs, nurse," he said.

"But I must put on Lottie's shoes first," panted nurse, trying to hold the naughty child.

"I will put them on," said Raoul. "I

stand in my father's place, you know;" and he took hold of Lottie, made her sit down, and said to Martha, "Give me the shoes."

Lottie was still and silent. She dared not resist Raoul when he took the air of grave authority; and though she made the putting on of the shoes as difficult as she could, they did get on at last; and, after a long fit of sulks, Lottie resigned herself to her fate.





CHAPTER V.

HOT CHESTNUTS.

LOTTIE, in her black shoes, was trotting about the terrace. A little table and chair, the doll and its cradle, and various other toys were all around her. Out came Monsieur Pouf in his best clothes, with the foot of his wooden leg well waxed.

“Miss Lottie, I am going into Paris.”

“Yes, so I see,” said she, examining him from head to foot. “Have you waxed your wooden leg all the way up?”

“No; only the foot, miss. Have you any commissions for me?”

“Yes,” said Lottie solemnly. “Sit down there till I come back.” She soon returned with a little blue velvet purse.

"I intended to keep it, but now I am going to give it to you to buy some things for me."

"Very well. Oh, I see, a twenty-franc piece!"

"Yes," said Lottie, "it was the last present papa gave me, and I am very fond of it; but I have found out now you can't buy anything without money. Raoul and Martha have spent theirs, so now I must buy what I want myself."

"Very well, little miss. What shall I get for you?"

"First, a house," said Lottie; "for, you know, I don't like yours. I want one like papa's, or very near it; only it must have a terrace, for now I like terraces."

"Very well. What next?"

"A carriage — not a big one, but small. You can drive a carriage with one horse, or even a goat, can't you?"

"Oh, yes; and then?"

"Oh, my poor Pouf, I am afraid I have not money enough for any more."

“But say what you want, anyhow, miss.”

“White shoes — you can easily find the shop — it is such a large one, not like that horrid Golden Shoe. You have only to say you came from me, from little Charlotte.”

“Very well, miss ; I think I had better begin by buying the shoes.”

“Why ?”

“Because I shall not have enough money to buy the house.”

“Did you ever try to buy a house, old Pouf ?”

“No ; but I suppose —”

Lottie jumped up in a rage.

“Old Pouf, you are always supposing things to contradict me. You are never to say suppose again. This morning, when I wanted more sugar in my coffee, you said to Martha, ‘I suppose three lumps are enough for Lottie?’”

“Well, miss, I only supposed.”

“You are *not* to suppose. Will you do my commissions ? Yes or no ?”

“Yes, certainly.”

“Very well ; take this gold piece, and ask for what I have told you.”

“Very good,” said Pouf, slipping the gold into his purse. “I will do it ; but I sup —”

“Take care,” said Lottie, shaking her finger at him.

“Well, don’t reckon on the house and carriage — that is all I want to say.”

“Be off directly, and we shall soon see.”

“Very well, miss ; only you won’t be cross, I sup —”

“Oh, how you do provoke me !”

“Will you have some roast chestnuts, miss ?”

“Yes ; now you are good,” said Lottie.

“I will come down with you and get them.”

Lottie soon returned with a good store of chestnuts. She determined to give her doll a feast, so she laid the table with the doll’s dinner service, and put six chestnuts in the soup-tureen.

Just as she had finished her arrangements, her eyes fell on a little boy in the wooden balcony of the adjoining house. He was crying his heart out. Lottie went to the end of the terrace and peeped over.

"What are you crying for, little boy?" said she.

The child fixed his great eyes upon her.

"I am hungry," he said.

"Go and ask your mamma for some bread."

"She has none."

"Tell her to go and buy some."

"She has no money. She has taken her pillow to the pawnbroker."

"What for?"

"To pledge it."

"Will they give her any money?"

"Yes."

"She will bring back some bread, then?"

"Perhaps; but I am so hungry."

"Would you like some chestnuts?"

"Oh, yes, indeed."

Lottie fetched her soup-tureen.

“Hold out your pinafore,” she said; and six fine chestnuts tumbled into it.

The child shrieked with joy, and devoured the chestnuts, skin and all.

Lottie determined to be generous; one by one she threw the chestnuts over, till at last there remained but two, and those she really was going to keep for herself. She peeled them carefully, but as she raised them to her mouth she saw the hungry eyes of the little boy fixed on her, and the chestnuts went not into Lottie’s mouth, but into the poor boy’s pinafore. Then Lottie, with a feeling of joy in her heart she had never before experienced, danced with her doll about the terrace.

“Lottie! Lottie!” cried Raoul, “come, there are letters;” and, surrounded by his sisters, Raoul opened two letters that had just arrived. The first was from mamma:

“MY DEAR CHILDREN, — I am still very ill. Write and tell me if you are happy with your grandfather. I love you dearly, my poor darlings, and I am always your tender and devoted mother,

MARIE DAUBRY.”

“Poor mamma,” said Lottie, kissing the letter.

The second letter contained two bank-notes, each for one hundred francs.

“Oh, how rich we are!” said Lottie; “you can give me some if old Pouf does not bring —”

“Bring what?” said her brother.

“Nothing,” said Lottie; “it was my doll who was talking.”

“Make haste and read the letter,” said Martha.

And Raoul read as follows :

“MY DEAR CHILDREN, — My father’s illness has prevented us from writing before. He is now recovering, and sends the money for your journey. He wishes you to come at once. Your nurse can come with you to Nantes, and I will meet you there with the carriage. Send me a telegram before you start. You will be very welcome here, dear children, and will, I hope, be happy. Give my compliments to your nurse, and tell her I will pay her journey to Nantes.

Your affectionate aunt,

ELINOR DAUBRY.”

“So the letter has come at last,” said nurse, entering the room. “My treasures, I don’t like parting with you; but I have a letter from Mrs. Bogy, and she

tells me she will no longer pay for you, and you know I am very poor."

"But we are rich," said Lottie. "Raoul, show nurse the bank-notes."

"That is the money for the journey, Lottie," said nurse. "Well, now you are going to leave this horrid house. Are you not glad, Lottie?"

"I know what I want," said the child.

"What do you want, darling?"

"I will tell you when Pouf comes home. I don't want to go to Nantes; I don't know if I shall go or not. I will tell you when Pouf comes back." And Lottie went off to the terrace to watch for her friend.

"My poor darlings," said nurse, weeping over Raoul and Martha, "my heart is full at the thought of losing you. But Raoul should go to school; and you, Martha, must have education, and I can't give it to you. When are you to go, Raoul?"

"The day after to-morrow, nurse."

"Well, it might as well be at once; a

bitter dose is best swallowed down quick. Martha, you will begin to pack. I must go and find some one to take my place. Pouf will mind the shop, but some one must cook for him. Who is Lottie talking to?"

"Come down!" cried Lottie.

"Madame Nouft went to the window, and saw her husband helped out of the omnibus by the conductor.

"He is stiff," cried she; "he has got an attack of rheumatics and will be laid up for weeks. This finishes us up."

She ran down, followed by Lottie.

Poor Pouf seemed quite crippled.

"Well, my dear," said nurse, "you have got an attack."

"Yes," said her husband. "I felt it coming on in the omnibus." And he sank painfully into a chair.

Lottie crept up to his ear, and whispered:

"Have you done my commissions?"

"I have bought nothing, Miss Lottie.

The house was impossible, the carriage was impossible, and I felt too ill to go to the shop for the white shoes."

"Give me back my money," said Lottie sadly; "you do not do commissions very well."

Raoul and Martha came down to inquire what was the matter.

"He has got a rheumatic attack," said nurse; "he will be crippled for weeks, and I was relying on him to mind the shop. Who now is to serve the customers, and who is to rub him? He won't sleep a wink unless he is well rubbed. What are we to do? The first thing, at all events, is for him to get to bed."

"What shall we do?" said Martha to Raoul; "for nurse can't go with us."

"We must travel alone," said Raoul gravely.



CHAPTER VI.

THE JOURNEY.

THERE was a great bustle in the Station Montparnasse between seven and eight o'clock in the evening. The trains for Brest and Nantes were about to start ; nurse, with red eyes, was bidding farewell to her three dear children ; Raoul and Martha were sad enough ; Lottie full of questions :

“ How were they going to travel ? Why did not the boxes break the porters' heads ? Was every one going to see grandpapa ? ”

“ Good-by, good-by, my darlings,” said nurse ; “ it breaks my heart to part with you.”

“ But we shall come back,” said Lottie.”
“ If I don't like grandpapa's house, I shall

come back to you. Tell old Pouf I am coming back."

"Come along," said Raoul, "or we shall be late."

The children sprang into a carriage. Then Martha got into one corner, and Raoul put Lottie into another.

"But you will see nothing," said Martha, who knew Raoul liked the corners.

"Never mind me. The corners are best if you want to sleep."

"Oh, I shall not go to sleep," said Lottie, as the train glided out of the station.

But it was not long ere she changed her mind and was sound asleep.

Then came a shout :

"Le Mans ! Le Mans ! Le Mans ! Travellers for Nantes, Brest, and Angers, change carriages."

"Martha," cried Raoul, "wake Lottie up. We must change carriages."

Out tumbled the three children, Lottie rubbing her eyes.

"Oh," said she, "what a crowd! I am frightened, Martha, and I am hungry."

"I have plenty for you to eat, Lottie," said Raoul.

"But I am cold," wailed Lottie. "I want some hot milk."

"What are you doing here, little people?" said an official.

Raoul explained.

"The train for Nantes does not start for an hour," said the man. "See, there is the refreshment-room, with a good fire; and you can buy what you want."

The three children were soon warming themselves at the fire. Raoul ordered three cups of hot milk for his party.

After a little while he got fidgety, and wanted to see if the train was ready.

"Wait for me here," he said to his sisters; and off he went.

Soon after, a waiter came up to Martha and asked for the payment of the cups of milk. The child blushed painfully.

"I have no money," she said; "but I

will get it from my brother. Lottie, Lottie!"

"Yes, Martha."

"Now, mind you stop here till I come back; don't move; I shall be back in a minute."

It took, however, more than a minute to find Raoul; for the anxious little boy would not be satisfied till he had seen his luggage safe. The children returned together to the refreshment-room.

"Where is Lottie?" cried Raoul.

Lottie was nowhere to be seen.

"Are you looking for the little girl in white?" asked the keeper of the refreshment-counter. "She ran after you directly you were gone."

"Oh, where is she?" said Martha.

"You ought not to have left her, Martha," said Raoul.

"But I told her not to move."

"You know she is not obedient. Let us make haste and find her, for the time is getting on for our train."

They ran about the station calling Charlotte, Lottie; but there was no answer — no one had seen her. Presently the shout was heard, “Travellers for Nantes, take your seats!” and the poor children saw the train for Nantes steam out of the station.





CHAPTER VII.

THE SEARCH.

THE train for Nantes was gone, and the station was about to be closed for some hours.

The children were brought to the station-master. He was very kind, and made them sit down in his office.

“I have ordered every corner of the station to be searched,” said he; “and if the little girl is not found, I will telegraph all down the line, as the child may have got into a train by mistake.”

Presently came in the porter.

“Please, sir, she is not in the waiting-rooms, nor the luggage department, nor in any of the empty carriages: the whole place has been searched.”

As he finished speaking, another man came in.

"Well, sir, I have some news. You are looking for a little girl dressed in white, with long hair?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Raoul and Martha, rushing to him.

"Well, I saw her outside the station; and when the train for Brest went off, she ran about crying. Then I saw no more of her."

"She thinks we are gone," said Raoul. "Let us go and look for her."

"You seem very tired," said the station-master kindly. "I will send this man."

"Oh, no," said Raoul, "I must go; but Martha can stay here, if you will let her, sir."

Poor Martha, struggling with her sobs, could hardly stand, so she remained in the station-master's care while Raoul and the porter went outside the station. Every now and again Raoul shouted "Charlotte,"

but there was no reply. All of a sudden the porter stopped outside a little sort of hut.

"Jump up," he said to Raoul, "and look in."

Raoul looked, and shouted with joy. Inside the hut was a fire, and an old woman and Lottie. Without ceremony, he burst open the door.

"Oh, Raoul, dear Raoul!" said Lottie, flying into his arms.

He ate her up with kisses before he thought of scolding her.

Her story was soon told. She thought she saw Martha getting into the train, and then this train moved off. She thought her brother and sister were gone. She ran after them till she was out of breath and a good way from the station, then sat down sobbing. The old woman heard her, and took pity on her, promising to take her to the station in the morning.

"How could you, Lottie, imagine we should leave you behind?"

"I thought the train had gone off without your knowing it."

"You are a disobedient child," said Raoul, "and I won't lose sight of you again. Come, quick, to Martha."

"The station is to be closed," added the porter.

"What are we to do?" said Raoul. "See what comes of disobedience. Here we are at Le Mans, when we ought to be arriving at Nantes."

"I am very sorry," said Lottie — "very sorry; and I left my doll in the station."

They took leave gratefully of the good old woman and returned to the station, and found Martha crying bitterly. These tears made a little impression on Lottie, and she promised to be good in future.

The station-master said there would be a train in the early morning for Nantes, and he would put the children into the first-class waiting-room.

"It is warmed," he added. "There is

a good sofa and armchairs, and you can manage to pass the night there."

So in a few minutes Lottie and Martha were lying on the sofa, well covered by their careful brother. He then curled himself up in an armchair, and sorrow was soon forgotten in a sound sleep.





CHAPTER VIII.

AUNT ELINOR.

WITHOUT further adventure, the little travellers arrived at Nantes, and there a new anxiety awaited Raoul. He thought that no one for them would meet this train. They must go to a hotel.

Happily, however, they had not left the station ere a lady, very plainly dressed in black, and with a cloak and hood of dark green, accosted them.

“Raoul, Martha, Lottie,” she said.

“Oh, aunt, aunt Elinor!” cried Raoul and Martha, throwing themselves into her arms.

Lottie held aloof till her aunt, drawing her near, kissed her.

Explanation of the delay followed.

"I don't mind it a bit," said aunt Elinor ;
"but grandpapa does not like to be kept
waiting. Grandpapa is very good ; but,
you know, he was a naval officer."

"Captain of the Bellona," said Raoul.

"Just so. He is very old, but also very
firm ; and he is obeyed in his household as
he used to be on board his ship. I want
you to understand that."

"Now," said Raoul, "may I go and see
after our luggage, aunt ?"

"How sensible he seems !" said aunt
Elinor to Martha, when he was gone.

"Since papa died, Raoul is very thoughtful."

"You are dear children, I see. I am
thankful ; because grandpapa is so old, and
tiresome children would annoy him. I
must go and look for our carriage."

She went out ; and Lottie, coming up to
Martha, muttered :

"What a horrid old cloak she has ! Are
we going to be with poor people again ?"

"We are going to grandpapa's. How

silly you are, Lottie ! The cloak is ugly ; but what a nice face and gentle voice aunt has ! What are you doing with your pocket-book ? ”

“ I am taking notes for my letter to Pouf, when I get to grandpapa’s house.” So Lottie wrote :

“ We are at Nantes, my good old Pouf, and we have met a lady in a shabby gown and a horrid green cloak with a hood. She declares she is our aunt Elinor. Your poor Charlotte is very discontented ; and if grandpapa is not good to her, she will come back to you.”

Aunt Elinor and Raoul now returned. and the party were soon stowed away in an old-fashioned carriage, driven by a sturdy peasant.

“ Shall we start, miss ? ” said this good Gosset.

“ Not just yet, Gosset. Children, are you not hungry ? ”

“ Oh, yes, aunt,” said they.

Then aunt Elinor opened a basket, and

out came bread and butter, cold chicken, and wine. And as soon as the children had finished, she said :

“Make haste, Gosset, and take us home.”

After a good long drive the carriage stopped, and standing at the door was grandpapa. He was very tall and thin : but old age had made him stoop, and his head inclined towards his chest. His beard was silver white, and so was the little hair he possessed ; for the top of his head was bald.

“Here you are at last, Elinor. Thunder and lightning ! What has kept you ! For the last four hours I have been expecting you.”

“The children did not come by the first train, papa.”

“Thunder and lightning ! Did you not understand the telegram rightly ? ”

“Yes, papa ; but they lost the train at Le Mans.”

“Where are the children ? ”

“Here, papa.”

And the children looked up into a face which, though stern at times, was of exceeding beauty. With a bright and radiant smile he greeted and blessed them. Raoul and Martha were delighted; Lottie more terrified than pleased.

Then followed a run over the place: the arbor, which, in summer, formed a sort of sitting-room for the family; the garden, the fields, the brook that flowed calmly through the meadows, all were delightful to the children; but they were tired with travelling and excitement, and glad to get to bed early.





CHAPTER IX.

THE MICE.

AH!" said Lottie, sitting up in bed, "so we are at grandpapa's at last; and Martha is dressed and gone, and here is my breakfast."

Lottie attacked the milk and bread and butter with a good appetite. Presently she heard a little grating noise.

"What is that?" she said.

The noise ceased.

"I am not afraid," said Lottie; "but I would like to know what it is. Ah, I see!"

Creeping across the floor was a tiny gray creature, with bright black eyes.

"Good morning, little creature," said Lottie; "come here."

The little animal disappeared, as if by magic.

"It is very shy," said Lottie. "I will be quiet, and perhaps it will come back." And soon the creature did come back, followed, to Lottie's delight, by another like itself. They began to pick up the crumbs of Lottie's breakfast; when she made a slight movement they flew into a cupboard, and were seen no more.

"How very shy they are!" repeated Lottie. "I wonder what they are, and I wonder where are aunt Elinor, Raoul, and Martha? There is neither clock nor watch in this curious room. In papa's house there were beautiful clocks everywhere; one could always hear them going *tick-tack*. Well, I am awake, quite awake. I have had breakfast."

These last words were addressed to Raoul and Martha, who were peeping in at the door.

"You lazy child," said they, as they en-

tered ; "if you only knew how fine it is out of doors !"

"I can see the sun here," said Lottie.

"Now, Lottie," said Martha, "you cannot live here as you did at nurse's. Grandpapa likes every one to get up early."

"Have you seen him, then ?"

"Yes ; we have been to wish him good-morning. He was up."

"How is his head ?"

"His head ? What do you mean ?"

"Yes, I mean his head. Always like this ;" and down went Lottie's little nose upon her chest.

"Lottie, that is because he is old," said Raoul. "He is a very good grandpapa."

"Did he say 'Thunder and lightning' ?"

"Hush, Lottie ; he will say it indeed, if you don't wish him 'Good-day' before noon."

"It is not twelve yet."

"No, but it is past nine."

"Ah, that is not very late."

"Yes, Lottie, it is late. You cannot go

on here like you did in nurse's house ; and if you only saw how lovely it is out of doors, and what lots of animals there are ! ”

Lottie gave a look of triumph.

“ There are pretty ones here,” she said.

“ Here ? ” asked Martha, surprised.

“ Yes, in this room ; they came out of that cupboard, so pretty — gray, with bright black eyes and little whiskers. Hark ! there they are scratching.”

“ Ah, those are mice,” said Martha.

“ Mice ? ” cried Lottie, jumping out of bed.

“ To be sure.”

“ Mice — mice ! Oh, I will never sleep here again ! Ah, give me my stockings, quick ! Oh, are they on the bed ? Oh, my petticoat, Martha. I hear them ! My bodice ; quick, quick ! Oh, Martha, give me the towel — comb my hair, quick ! ”

“ But you were not afraid of them ? ” said Martha.

“ I did not know they were mice. I am afraid of mice — every one is. Do make

haste, Martha, dear. Martha, I want to tell grandpapa I won't sleep here."

"You must tell aunt Elinor, Lottie; she is the mistress of the house."

Aunt Elinor declared that in such an old house as theirs there were mice everywhere. She offered a trap or a cat, but Lottie declined both.

She went off to visit the poultry, and when dinner-time came, having breakfasted late, she could not eat much, and she reserved her appetite for the sweet things, and when she found there were none, her temper rose. After dinner she said to Martha:

"Just like poor people — no tarts, no dessert."

"Greedy child!" said Martha. "Come out for a walk with me."

"No," said Lottie; "I shall stay in the arbor."

"Then you really will stay there?" said aunt Elinor, who had heard all.

Lottie nodded assent.

In the arbor she yawned and stretched and whined and lounged. She could see no beauty in the sun, nor blue sky, nor silver clouds, nor green fields, nor sparkling water. She was weary, because she was selfish and idle. To amuse herself she went into the field. It was disobedience; but, alas! Lottie cared not for that. She was in a very bad humor, because she saw plainly enough that she would not be able to have her own way at Closjoli, as grandpapa's house was called. Following a path through the fields, Lottie came to the high-road. She saw a carriage standing there, a beautiful carriage, like the one she had so regretted.

"Ah, if I had only a carriage like that!" said she, stamping with anger. She went up to it, and saw through the open door a young lady reading in the corner, elegantly dressed. The lady smiled when she saw the child in white.

Lottie put in her head.

"Madame, are you rich?"

The lady burst out laughing.

"Are you rich?" repeated Lottie.

"Yes, my child."

Lottie put her foot on the carriage-step.

"And have you any little children?"

"Ah, unfortunately, no."

"Very well, madame; take me for your little girl;" and so saying, Lottie entered the carriage, and poured out an incoherent story of a fine house and fine carriage, Nurse Goodheart, Closjoli, a grandpapa who scolded, mice, and a poor dinner.

"So you live at Closjoli?" said the lady, when she stopped.

"Only since yesterday," declared Lottie.

"You are one of the little Daubrys, Monsieur Daubry's grandchild?"

"Yes, madame; and I am called Charlotte."

"Very well, Charlotte; when my husband, who has gone to gather me wild flowers, comes back, I will take you to Closjoli, and I will tell your aunt what you wish."

Presently came up a gentleman with a large bouquet of wild flowers. His wife told him what had passed, and the coachman was ordered to proceed to Closjoli. When the carriage was driven into the courtyard, all the family was gathered together under a large walnut-tree.

Lottie suddenly felt remorseful at the idea of leaving Raoul and Martha; and she felt also it was a silly thing to offer to become other people's little girl. So when the carriage stopped, she whispered to the lady :

"Don't tell them what I said."

"Oh, then you will stay at Closjoli?"

"I will stay with my brother and sister."

"They seem very sweet children," said the lady, as she went towards the group.

"We have brought you back a little lost bird," said she, saluting aunt Elinor and grandpapa.

"What! have you lost yourself already at Closjoli?" said the old man, catching hold of Lottie's long tresses.

Lottie held her head down and blushed. She felt dreadfully afraid lest the lady should not keep her counsel, and she stuck fast by her side as long as she remained, and with great relief she saw her depart.

"Why did you stay all by yourself, Charlotte?" said aunt Elinor later on.

"Because I was sulky."

"Why were you sulky?"

"Because I like dessert, and there was none; because I don't like mice, and they are in my room."

"Ah, you like dessert?" said aunt Elinor brightly; "well, the good God will soon send you some. We shall have strawberries, raspberries, mulberries, cherries: and, after those, pears, peaches, nuts, and chestnuts. Every one will have dessert then, the poor as well as the rich, and the birds also. Don't you like fruit, Lottie?"

"Oh, yes, aunt."

"Very well; you will have plenty here. The desserts you buy in shops are not

wholesome and cost money, so we only have them on feast-days ; but the desserts the good God sends us we eat as long as He pleases to give them. Now about the mice. Come with me, and you will see what I have done ;” and aunt Elinor showed Lottie how she had stopped up the holes and locked the cupboard, which was quite empty.

“How good you are, aunt Elinor !” said Lottie ; “I like to stay with you now the mice are gone.”

“With or without dessert, Lottie ?”

“Yes,” said Lottie firmly.





CHAPTER X.

A RIDING LESSON.

THE weather being fine next day, the whole party went into the arbor after dinner. Grandpapa smoked his long pipe and aunt Elinor knitted; Martha was busy with crochet and Lottie had her doll, while Raoul amused himself by pelting little stones into the river. Grandpapa's eyes were fixed on Raoul.

"What a funny bird!" cried Lottie.

"That is a magpie," said grandpapa. "I suppose there is a nest somewhere near. Raoul, climb that tree," pointing to a poplar, "and see if there is a nest there."

Raoul stared.

"Make haste," said grandpapa. "Thunder and lightning! you don't mean you are afraid?"

Raoul reddened to the roots of his hair.

"I am not afraid," he said.

"Grandpapa," interrupted Martha, "Raoul never has climbed a tree in his life."

"That is just why I want him to learn, my dear. Now, Raoul, try."

And Raoul did try, in spite of Martha and Lottie hanging on to his coat to prevent him. Once, again, and a third time did Raoul climb up, only to get a good fall on the grass. He was ready to try further, when grandpapa called out, "Enough!"

"Raoul," said he, "you must not be like a girl; your hands are too white and your hair too smooth to please me. At your age you ought to run, to climb, to jump, both to strengthen your body and make you courageous. Now, you will try and learn this, won't you?"

"Indeed I will, grandpapa," said Raoul heartily.

“Oh, here is Grison. Good-morning, Grison,” said the two girls, as the good gray horse who had brought them from Nantes came into the field. Raoul ran up to the horse.

“Now, then,” said grandpapa, “jump up.”

Poor Raoul! he had never ridden without a saddle, never mounted but a little pony, and to jump on the bare back of a big horse was a feat for him. He ran back, took a good leap, touched Grison's side, and fell on the grass.

“Catch hold of his mane,” said grandpapa.

Off went Raoul, grasping at Grison's mane, but in vain—he slipped back as before. Martha and Lottie rushed on him, and brought him back to grandpapa.

“Look at him, Elinor; is he not a poor creature?”

“I think he is a brave boy,” said aunt Elinor. “He is not used to these rough things; he is delicate.”

"Yes, I know ; but I want to make him strong. A good sword needs a stout scabbard. Understand, Raoul, a manly soul should not dwell in a languid body. Ah, there is Gosset. Call him. Gosset, put this boy on Grison. I want him to learn to ride without a saddle."

"Ah, grandpapa, pray, pray don't!" cried Martha and Lottie, catching hold of Raoul.

"A mutiny!" said Monsieur Daubry, with a smile. "Thunder and lightning! Raoul, let those little women mind their spinning. You are not afraid, I am sure. Grison is as quiet as a lamb, and you are as nimble as a squirrel, although you have not yet learned to climb. The grass is thick and soft. Up with you!"

Raoul shook off his sisters and ran to Gosset, who took him up by the waist and put him on the horse. Raoul seated himself firmly, bent in his knees, and held the horse's mane with both hands ; and Gosset said, "Go on, my beauty!" Grison

walked slowly round the field, led by Gosset, while Raoul slipped first to the right, then to the left, then forwards, then backwards. But he managed not to fall off, and when Grison reached the arbor he sprang nimbly to the ground.

"Bravo!" said grandpapa; "that jump shows you have good legs. Well, Charlotte, now is your fear all gone?"

"I am not afraid," said Lottie, "and I want to ride on the horse now. Put me on, Gosset."

"Shall I, sir?" said the servant.

"No, no," replied his master.

"I will ride!" said Lottie, stamping her foot. "I will sit on Grison. Take me up, Gosset, by my waist, as you did Raoul. It will be amusing to go about in that way."

"May I, sir?" said Gosset.

"Of course not. Thunder and lightning!"

Charlotte was crimson with rage. Turning in her fury to Gosset, she screamed out, "Thunder and lightning! Obey me!"

“Oh, Lottie!” cried Raoul and Martha.

“Take Grison to his stall, Gosset,” said grandpapa; “and you, Miss Charlotte, come to me.”

Lottie stood before her grandfather with an angry and rebellious frown on her face.

“Miss Lottie,” said he, “were you ever a naval officer?”

“No, Mr. Grandfather.”

“Did you ever make a campaign in Greece, and did you fight at Navarino?”

“No, Mr. Grandfather.”

“Did you, miss, ever command the frigate Bellona?”

“No, Mr. Grandfather.”

“Did you ever fire cannon from a ship riddled by the enemy?”

“No, Mr. Grandfather.”

“Then you had better leave to those who have done these things the right of using the words, ‘Thunder and lightning!’ and keep to the style of conversation suit-

able to an obedient and well brought-up little girl."

"Yes, grandpapa," said Lottie, jumping on his knees and giving him a hug.





CHAPTER XI.

GRANDPAPA'S RUBBING.

A FEW days after, Lottie was in great spirits at breakfast. She had dreamed about nurse and Pouf, and wanted to tell Martha all about it.

"Make haste, Lottie," said Martha, "for we begin to work to-day."

"What work?"

"Our education, to be sure."

"What is education?" said Lottie, getting very cross.

"Learning lessons. Raoul has gone to a tutor; you and I are to study with aunt."

"Martha, come down with me to the river, and I will tell you my dream."

The entrance of aunt Elinor silenced her. Aunt had under her arm copy-books

and reading-books, and in her hand an ink-stand.

"We will work in the library," said she.

"Come along, children."

"I like to work here," said Lottie.

"That is impossible, my dear."

"I wish to keep grandpapa company."

"Grandpapa's legs are much swelled, and he will not get up till dinner-time, and not then unless the friction I have given him makes his legs less stiff."

"What is friction, aunt?"

"Rubbing part of the body, my child."

"I want to rub grandpapa."

"But it is done. Now, come along."

Lottie had to obey.

She was very troublesome at her lessons, but she had to yield. At last she was set free, and she bounded out of the library like a young fawn. She ran about the garden, she shouted, she jumped, and at last she came indoors out of breath, her cheeks glowing, her eyes sparkling. She found grandpapa in his armchair.

"Are you ill, grandpapa?"

"Yes. I can hardly walk."

"Why?"

"Because my limbs are so stiff."

"Why are they stiff?"

"Because they are old, and because I walked too far yesterday."

"What is it that unstiffens legs, grandpapa?"

"Rest and rubbing."

"Do rub my arm, grandpapa."

Monsieur Daubry complied.

"Ah, how easy it is!" cried Lottie.

"And will this rubbing cure you, grandpapa?"

"It relieves me, Lottie."

"I want to relieve you. Put out your leg."

"It is not as easy as you think. Give me that stool; quietly now. That's right. Now find the flannel."

"What flannel?"

"A bit of red flannel which aunt rubs me with. It is at the back of my arm-chair."

"Here it is. Now, are you ready?"

"Yes; but go gently."

Lottie knelt by her grandfather and rubbed his leg, while her tongue continued to wag.

"What a long leg you have got," she said, "and how hard it is!—nearly as hard as my old Pouf's wooden leg."

"Who is old Pouf?"

"Nurse's husband; and I thought him very old till I saw you. Now I have seen you, I think every one else is young."

"Well, my acquaintance has given you one advantage then. Are you tired?"

"Oh, no; does it do you any good?"

"It always warms me a little."

"I am not hurting you?"

"Oh, no, I hardly feel it."

"How very odd, when I am rubbing so hard! Grandpapa, I want to ask you something."

"Well, what is it?"

"What has become of your teeth?"

"They have left me, and so has my hair."

“Ah, to be sure, your hair. And won't they grow again?”

“No, Lottie.”

“How very odd!” said the child, pausing in her work.

“It is sad, Lottie.”

“Very sad,” said Lottie, rubbing again with all her strength. “I am not hurting the bones of your leg, am I, grandpapa?”

“No, my dear.”

“How curious legs are!” said Lottie; “and so are bones. Grandpapa, how does the good God put bones into legs?”

“When the good God created man, I was not present, Lottie.”

“Were not you, and you so old?”

“But not so old as the world, Lottie.”

“The world,” continued Lottie, “how big it is! I never thought it was so big. If I were to walk and walk on and on, I should come to the end of the world, should not I?”

“To the end of the earth you would.”

"Why, what is there besides the earth?"

"There is the sea."

"Well, suppose that when I got to the sea my shoes turned into boats, and I went on walking on the water?"

"Then you would go all round the world, for the earth is round."

"Round?" cried the child. "Oh, grandpapa, it is flat!"

"It seems flat to you, my child, because you are not old enough to study geography."

"What is that?"

"A science which teaches us that the earth is round, and turns round."

"Ah, grandpapa," said Lottie, springing to her feet, "you *are* mistaken ; it does not turn."

"You will know better later on, little one. You cannot now understand the marvels of creation."

"What made creation?"

"It was God."

"It is God everywhere. He made the

sky, rivers, flowers, and sea. However, he did not make the ships."

"But are not ships made of wood, Lottie? and wood comes from trees, and he made the trees."

"How nice it must be to be big, like God!" said Lottie."

"Is it not nice to be little?"

"Oh, no; I should like to be big, only that—"

"Well, what?"

"Big people get old."

"Ah, Miss Lottie does not like old people, and it is very cruel of her."

The child dropped the flannel, and twined her arms round Monsieur Daubry's neck.

"I love you, grandpapa," said she, kissing his bald head; "and you see I love you, because I rub the bones of your leg."

"Yes, my Lottie, and you are a good little girl," said grandpapa tenderly, "and so I shall tell aunt Elinor."

Just then aunt Elinor came in, and

asked what Lottie was doing with the red flannel.

"She has been rubbing me, Elinor; she is going to be very good to old people, though she does not like them."

Lottie was graver than usual the rest of the day, and the last words she said before going to sleep were :

"How *does* the good God put bones into legs? and how *can* he turn round the earth so gently that no one feels it and nothing is upset?"





CHAPTER XII.

A LETTER FROM MAMMA.

A LETTER from mamma!" cried Martha, joyously waving it in her hand, as Raoul and Lottie came into the library. "See, the address is 'Monsieur Raoul Daubry, Closjoli, near Nantes.'"

Raoul eagerly opened the letter and read a few lines of tender affection; then followed these words:—

"I am still between life and death, my poor darlings. The doctors are puzzled; some say they can cure me, others that they cannot. My only hope is in Providence, and I resign myself to the will of God. I am going to try a new remedy.

Pray for your poor mamma; importune the good God for her, she feels so much the separation from you."

Raoul's voice trembled. Martha sobbed.

"I pray for her every day," said Martha; "don't you, Raoul?"

"I forget sometimes; but now, if you like, we will always say our night prayers together, and we will say three *Paters* and *Aves* for her."

"That will be very long," said Lottie, shaking her head.

"Oh, Lottie!" replied her sister reproachfully.

"Well, it is your business, as you and Raoul are not cross with the good God."

"Are you still cross with him?" asked Raoul.

"Yes, indeed," replied Lottie earnestly.

"But you will say the prayers with us I think."

"Ah, no; you never ask people you are cross with for anything, for they never give it."

"Then you don't want mamma to be cured?"

"I do. I love mamma dearly. I wish I knew what would cure her. I think doctors can."

"They do cure people sometimes," said Raoul.

"I would rather pray to a doctor than to the good God," continued Lottie.

"Nonsense, Lottie; people don't pray to doctors."

"I shall pray to whom I like," said Lottie, stamping her foot.

Aunt Elinor came in and was told the news.

"How is grandpapa?" asked Martha.

"Better than I thought, dear. I was anxious and sent for the doctor; he has come, and he says it is only over-fatigue. He is chatting to grandpapa, and I want Gosset's brother to see him, so I am going after him. Learn your lessons nicely, dear children."

Aunt Elinor went away, and so did

Raoul and Martha; but Lottie sat in a corner, her elbows on her knees, in deep thought. In a few minutes she rose and made her way to her grandfather's room, pushed open the door, and went in. Grandpapa sat in an armchair, in a flannel dressing-gown, and his legs wrapped in flannel. Beside him was an elderly man with spectacles, and a riding-whip in his hand.

Slowly did Lottie advance, her eyes cast down; then sinking on her knees before this gentleman with clasped hands and a look of rapt entreaty, she said:—

“Mr. Doctor, cure mamma.”

“What are you doing, Lottie?” cried grandpapa. “Why are you kneeling before the doctor?”

“Because I am praying, grandpapa.”

“Praying, child?”

“Yes, grandpapa. I do so want mamma to be cured; and, as doctors cure, I want this gentleman to cure mamma.”

“Without seeing her, my dear?” said the doctor.

“Does the good God see all those *he* cures?”

“Ah, but the good God *is* the good God, my child, and we kneel only to him,” said grandpapa. “Come here, Lottie.” Lottie rose and went to him. “Tell me what is in your mind, little one,” said he, patting her head.

“Mamma is ill. She writes to ask us to pray to the good God for her. Raoul and Martha are going to say three *Paters* and *Aves* every evening; but I am cross with the good God, and I thought that, as doctors cure, if I prayed to a doctor as one prays to the good God, on one’s knees with clasped hands, he would cure mamma.”

“Oh, how silly my poor little Lottie is to believe all this, and to be cross with the good God, who alone is all powerful, and who alone holds in his hands life and death!”

“Him only?” said Lottie wistfully.

“Him alone, my child. He is our Creator; all the rest are creatures.”

"You also, grandpapa?"

"Yes, I also, Lottie."

"And can't creatures cure other creatures?"

"They do what they can; but the great Physician is the good God, and we only kneel before him."

"Him, always him!" said Lottie; "and he has no address, and one can't write to him nor see him."

"But we can speak to him, my child. When Raoul and Martha say, *Our Father who art in Heaven*, they are speaking to the good God."

"Are you sure he hears them, grandpapa?"

"Oh, yes, he hears; and he has such a quick ear that he hears even the beating of that little heart of yours, Lottie."

"He hears my heart beat?"

"Indeed, yes, Lottie."

"He knows that I am cross with him?"

"Yes, for you don't speak to him."

“Oh, yes, prayer is speaking to Him. Grandpapa, I always say my prayers at night — those I know by heart; but still, I am cross with him.”

“But why?”

“Why?” said Lottie indignantly. “I had a papa, a mamma, a beautiful house, full of looking-glasses, a carriage lined with blue, and servants, and the good God took them all away.”

“Was it really him?”

“So they told me: it was the will of the good God.”

“Well, so it was; but he left you a brother and sister, and he gave you old Pouf, and an old grandpapa, a good aunt, fields, a river, pretty trees —”

“And hot chestnuts and the magpies, grandpapa. I like the magpies.”

“So, after all, the good God is not unkind, you see.”

The door opened, and aunt Elinor, followed by a peasant, came in.

“What is the child doing here?”

"Lottie is rather original to-day," replied grandpapa.

"Now run away, Lottie, and learn your catechism," said aunt Elinor.

Lottie took from her pocket a small and well-worn book, and repaired to the meadows. She did not pay much attention to the catechism, but she was very thoughtful. She looked long and earnestly at the trees, the grass, and the magpies. All day long she was wonderfully good and submissive. After she was in bed, Raoul came to wish her good-night.

"Where are you and Martha going to say your prayers, Raoul?"

"In the library, Lottie."

"I wish you would come and say them here. Pray for mamma here."

"You will be asleep, Lottie."

"No, I will keep awake. I will look at the moon and count the stars."

Half an hour later Raoul and Martha came into Lottie's room, and found her blue eyes wide open.

“I have counted thirty-eight,” said she.

Then when her brother and sister knelt down, she also knelt on the bed, and, with her little face turned towards the stars, she devoutly said the three *Paters* and *Aves*. As they were finished, Lottie fell back on her pillow asleep, but reconciled forever with him who made the stars.





CHAPTER XIII.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

AUNT ELINOR'S promise to Charlotte was kept : the time for dessert was come. First came wood-strawberries, then those of the garden ; and then the cherry-trees, after having shown their fairy-like blossoms, became loaded with fruit. Raoul, now well sunburnt and an admirable climber, shook down the white and crimson fruit into the baskets held by his aunt and sisters. Then, after an hour or two of this amusing sort of work, the little party sat on the grass and feasted on the cherries.

“Raoul, shall you be a sailor?” said Lottie ; “you can climb so well.”

Raoul looked at his aunt.

"Grandpapa has spoken to you, my boy, has he not?" said she kindly.

"Oh, yes, aunt, often," replied her nephew, with a sigh.

"Well, Raoul, you see he is wise. The navy is slow, uphill work, not suited to you, who will be head of your family. What would become of your sisters if you were on board ship, absent for years, perhaps? The law is the right profession for you."

"Yes, aunt; but it is hard."

"What are *we* going to do?" said Lottie.

"Women never do anything," replied Martha; "do they, aunt?"

"Not generally," said aunt Elinor. "Women, as a rule, stay at home and mind the house; but some are obliged to earn their own living, and then they can be telegraph clerks or governesses or keep shops."

"I should like to be a governess," said Martha.

"And I'll keep a shop," cried Lottie, "only it must be a pretty shop. I will sell flowers or cakes or toys." "Raoul," she continued, "you may be a sailor: Martha and I can take care of ourselves; we will sell toys."

"You talk like a baby," said Martha. "You must buy toys before you can sell them."

"So we will buy them."

"What with, Lottie?"

"With money. Don't you know I have twenty francs."

"But how could any one furnish a shop with twenty francs?"

"Not a little toyshop? Why, Martha, I have seen dolls for half a franc; cats, dogs, and sheep for only a penny. Now, how many half-francs are there in twenty francs?"

"Forty," answered Raoul.

"Then," said Lottie triumphantly, "forty little toys would make a very pretty shop."

“Now, Lottie,” said aunt Elinor, “take a bunch of violets to grandpapa.”

Off ran Lottie, and soon returned, saying grandpapa wanted to speak to Raoul.

“My boy,” said grandpapa, “I have a very serious matter to talk to you about. It is time for you to think of going to college. Now, I have interest enough to get you a free place in one of the Government colleges, where you would be called bursar. You would find it very hard in the beginning. The proud will look down on you — the foolish will torment you — the bad try to injure you. A bursar must have great patience, for his self-love will have many a wound.”

Raoul hung his head ; the prospect, for a boy so delicately nurtured as he had been, was bitter.

“I can spare you all this. I can pay for you in one of the colleges at Nantes.”

Raoul raised his head.

“But then I must borrow some money, which will decrease the portion of your

little sisters. I am far from rich, as you know, and my pension from Government ceases with my life. I have little to leave to your aunt Elinor and your sisters. Now, I have put the case before you, and you are free to choose."

"I will be a bursar," said Raoul.

Grandpapa laid his hand on Raoul's head.

"You will be a good head to your family," he said; "you have the courage to make a sacrifice. In a short time I shall send you to Nantes, to go through your examination; and if you pass, I will apply for a bursarship."





CHAPTER XIV.

A VICTORY.

THE day came for Raoul to go to Nantes, and aunt Elinor had intended to go with him. Early in the morning she came to Raoul.

“Grandpapa has had a very bad night,” she said. “I do not like to leave him.”

“I will go alone!” said the boy bravely. “Of course, you can’t come, dear aunt. But I don’t know what grandpapa will say.”

“It will depend on you, Raoul. He likes to hear you speak in a manly, decided manner.”

“So I will, aunt; don’t be afraid.”

Raoul went to the side of Monsieur Daubry’s bed.

"Grandpapa, please, aunt Elinor cannot go with me. She can't possibly leave you. I want to go alone."

"You are too young to go alone," the invalid murmured.

"Grandpapa, why do you treat me like a little girl? I am going to be the head of the family."

Grandpapa smiled.

"Very well, my boy," he said. "Take Gosset with you, and may God bless you!"

In Nantes, Raoul met some intimate friends of his grandfather, who declared he must come and stay the night with them.

Raoul declined.

"Oh, well," said Gustavus Lecours, a lad of about his own age, "we will see about that after the exam."

The formidable examination was at length over, and Raoul found he had some hours to wait before the train — which once or twice a day stopped at a station much nearer to Closjoli than Nantes — would start.

He walked about the pleasant town of Nantes to pass the time. Presently he saw coming towards him one of the examiners. With a tremendous effort Raoul approached him.

“Sir, I have no father, and I live with my grandfather, who is eighty-five years of age, and who is ill. Might I give him joy by saying I am likely to succeed?”

The gentleman smiled.

“Raoul Daubry, are you not?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then tell your grandfather you will be one of the first on the list.”

Words can faintly express the joy that filled Raoul's heart. He wanted to run, to jump—to do something to show his delight.

At this moment he was hailed by Gustavus Lecours.

“All right, Raoul,” cried he, “come along; you must stay with us. We have tickets for the circus; such splendid horsemanship you never saw! A whole party

of us are going, and I have a place for you. Here is the note my father has written to your aunt, which old Gosset can take back, and you can go home to-morrow and tell them all the news."

Raoul's heart swelled. A circus — horses — a party — how delicious! But conscience pricked also, and Raoul said :

"No ; I must go home. Grandpapa is not well, and he expects me."

"Nonsense !" said Gustavus. "Come along ;" and he took Raoul by the arm.

A great struggle went on in poor Raoul's mind. But at last he broke away from Gustavus, saying :

"No, I will not disappoint grandpapa ;" and ran with all his speed to the station.

During the journey he could not but feel a keen regret for the lost pleasure ; but soon the thought of the joyous welcome home, and the good news he brought, and the delicious sense of strength that self-conquest ever brings, filled his heart with joy.

He left the station and ran nearly all the way home. When he came in sight of the house, it surprised him to see no watching faces at the windows, no expectant figures in the garden.

"Grandpapa is worse," said Raoul; and he dashed into the house.

All the doors were open; the Master of life and death had but lately crossed the threshold.

Monsieur Daubry was dying.

Raoul made his way to the bedside.

"Grandpapa," he said, "I have succeeded."

A smile lit up the dying face. He raised his hand to bless the boy. His last look, his last thought, was for Raoul.



CHAPTER XV.

A SURPRISE.

A MONTH passed away, and it was a day of weeping and sorrow at Closjoli. Raoul was going to school. A free place had been obtained, and he was about boldly to face the hardships his grandfather had predicted.

The carriage to take him and his luggage to the station stood in the courtyard. Martha and Lottie hung about him crying, aunt Elinor busy to the last moment providing for his comfort.

At length the moment came ; and Raoul, throwing himself back in the carriage as it rolled out of the gates, gave himself up to his tears.

A few minutes later a great bump made him start. He looked out. The wheels of the carriage had caught in those of another coming in an opposite direction, and the two drivers were exchanging words not of the politest kind.

He looked at the other carriage. What — who was this ?

A lady. She put out her head — she saw him.

“Raoul !” “Mamma !”

One instant more, and Raoul leapt from his carriage and was by her side.

“Where are you going, my darling boy ?”

“To school, mamma.”

“Are we near Closjoli ?”

“Oh, yes, very near.”

“Come back with me.”

And before Lottie and Martha had left off crying, the noise of carriage-wheels was heard in the court.

And then who shall paint the joy of those little hearts ? — Raoul returned, and

mamma — dear, sweet mamma — come back !

It was some time before mamma was able to tell her story. Her health was restored, and the death of her mother had placed her in possession of a large fortune. Her first thought had been to hasten to the children she loved so much.

A week passed away, and again a carriage stood in the courtyard of Closjoli, and again there was a farewell.

But this time only aunt Elinor was to be left behind, and her sorrow in parting with the children was mixed with so much joy that their future lives would be thus well guarded, that she could not grieve.

Raoul was to enter the large and celebrated Jesuit college at St. A., and Martha and Lottie were to have an excellent governess. But it was a settled thing that vacations were to be spent in Closjoli.

“Good-by, good-by, dear, dear aunt !” cried three silvery voices. “We shall soon come back — soon come back to you !”



ALLIE'S RAG BAG.

MAMMA," said Allie, coming into her mother's room one morning, "what shall I do with my rag money this time? I have just sold the rags, and the two broken frying-pans, and the cracked furnace, to old Mr. Isaacs. There he is, bowing to you from the wagon."

So he was : a little thin, yellow-looking man, bent nearly double, but with a pleasant, kindly, patriarchal face, not common to rag-men generally. Mrs. Morgan smiled, and bowed pleasantly from the window, after which he whipped up his lean old horse, and rode contentedly away.

"How much did Mr. Isaacs give you, Allie?" asked her mother.

"Seventy-five cents," she answered triumphantly. "Just think of it! I had ever so many rags, you know. The time before the last I gave it to blind Mary, and the last time it bought two tickets to the Orphans' Entertainment for Freddie and myself. I would like to do something new with it now, mamma."

Mrs. Morgan reflected for a moment. "Suppose you invest it in tobacco, this time," she said, meeting Allie's astonished gaze.

"In tobacco, mamma!" exclaimed the little girl; "why, what a funny thing to do."

"Not at all, when you understand, my dear, I am going, to-morrow, to visit the Little Sisters of the Poor; and, if you wish, I will take you with me. The old men of whom they have charge will be delighted to receive a present of tobacco for their pipes, and, as the poor old women

might be jealous if forgotten, we will take them a half bushel of those fine apples grandmother sent us last fall. What do you say ? ”

“ Oh, mamma, that will be delightful ! ” answered Allie, her eyes aglow with anticipation. “ May Freddie go with us, and shall I tell him ? ”

“ Yes, dear ; and then you may come back and help me sew buttons on these old clothes, for I have some writing to do before dark, and I wish to have the bundles packed this evening.”

“ Are they for the old men and women, mamma ? ”

“ Yes. Call Freddie here, and I will tell you something about the Little Sisters, and the good work they are doing.”

Away flew Allie to find her brother, and the two children soon returned together. Then Allie seated herself to her task, and their mother told them how a poor, simple country girl had first undertaken this great, good work of caring for the aged and in-

firm, how she had been joined by other zealous souls, how the wonderful charity had grown and increased, until in nearly all the large European cities, and several in the United States, the Little Sisters of the Poor had established houses; how they lived entirely on charity, and yet seemed to thrive and prosper everywhere.

"How long have they been here, mamma?" asked Freddie.

"About six years," said his mother. "When they first came they had not even beds to lie upon, but were obliged to sleep on the floor; but they have succeeded so well that they have been enabled to purchase a house on the Eaton road, about a mile and a half from here. They have between sixty and seventy old persons under their charge, and nearly all these people are very infirm."

The work was soon finished, and the children assisted in tying up the bundles, till all was completed. Then, laughing as they went along at their odd errand, they

started off to buy the tobacco, telling the storekeeper, as he weighed it for them, that it was for the poor, and they hoped he would give good measure. This somewhat strange request elicited several inquiries from the man, and resulted in his adding half a pound to the purchase.

The following day, after an early dinner, the carriage was brought round, the packages stowed away under the seats, and in a short time they had left the heart of the city, and were upon a dusty road, lined on either side for the most part by lumber-yards, with here and there a stretch of hill-side, untenanted, and bleak beyond description. At length the carriage stopped before a painted wooden wall, enclosing a wicket gate, with "Home for the Aged" painted in black letters above it. Mrs. Morgan and the children alighted, and, in answer to a ring of the bell, a Sister appeared ("a little Sister, indeed," whispered Allie), and smilingly invited them into the Lodge parlor, which was uncarpeted, and

as poorly furnished as could be, but very clean and neat.

"I will call the good Mother," she said, and rang another little bell.

"Who is the good Mother, mamma?" asked Allie, when the Sister left the room.

"The Superioress," answered her mother; "the other Sister and the old people all call her so."

"How nice that is!" said the little girl; "it sounds as if they loved her."

A pleasant-faced, bright-eyed Sister now appeared, and extended her hand to Mrs. Morgan.

"These are my children, good Mother," said that lady; "I have brought them to see your children."

"I have very many more than you, Madame," replied the Mother, laughing; "the little ones are welcome." Then, giving them each a hand, she said: "Come, we will go to the house, and you shall see *our* children."

Mrs. Morgan followed, after giving or-

ders to the carriage-driver for the proper disposition of the basket containing the apples and the paper of tobacco. They crossed a wide, open space, stony and uncleared as yet, but capable of being much beautified by cultivation.

"We shall have fine grounds when we are rich," said the good Mother; "but just now we are too poor. Let us go first to the chapel."

They followed her into the neat little chapel, simply decorated, but holding our Lord within its tabernacle, — the only Jewel it needed to make it beautiful and holy. All knelt a moment; then they crossed the hall, and the good Mother opened a door, disclosing a large room "just filled with old ladies," as Freddie afterwards expressed it. Surely there were more old women there assembled than either of the children had ever before seen in one apartment: some in bonnets and shawls, as though just ready for a walk; some in close black hoods, from

which they peeped out at the visitors, curious and kindly; some in spotless caps, with broad white ruffles set round their faces like a frame; some bright and cheerful, and merry-looking even; some grave and sad-featured, as though they had gone through many straits before reaching this peaceful anchorage of their old age; some trembling and infirm; some erect and healthy, but all neat and clean and comfortable, all looking contented and happy. The apples were brought, and the children distributed them, shyly at first, but with many a fervent "God bless you, darlint!" and "The Lord spare you, dear!" from aged lips. One old woman, ninety years of age, and childish, wanted them to stay all night, and looked wistfully after them as they left the room. They next visited the dormitories. The beds were clean and comfortable, with ample covering; and while nothing could be more poor or simple than the furniture, an air of warmth and rest pervaded all the place. Crossing

the yard once more, but in a different direction, the Mother opened the door of a small, two-story frame building, and they saw a group of perhaps twenty old men, seated on chairs and benches, scattered around the room. They seemed of all ages, from sixty to ninety, and of all nations.

"*Bon jour*, Henri," said the Mother, to an old man with a woollen cap on his head, who sat bowing and smiling at the window.

"*Bon jour*, good Mother," said Henri, nodding and smiling more profusely than before. He stretched out his hands to the children, and Freddie said, "You look like a soldier, sir!" at which all the old men laughed, to Freddie's great confusion, while Henri answered, in broken English, nodding all the time, "Yes—yes—I have been."

They all gathered around the good Mother as the women had done, and seemed, indeed, like so many little children, seeking her pleasant word and smile.

"Have you a song, my little man?" said a fine-looking old fellow, with snow-white hair and long, silky beard.

"No, sir," answered Freddie, "I cannot sing, but I have some tobacco for you and your friends; I'm sure you would rather have that than a song."

"Three cheers for the little fellow!" cried the old man; "three cheers, and many thanks for the tobaccy."

Three cheers went round, and Freddie blushed at finding himself for the second time a hero. The tobacco was produced and deposited with the jolly Irishman, who promised to distribute it fairly and speedily among his companions.

In the adjoining room, the dormitory, were two helpless old men, whom the Sisters were obliged to carry to and from the chapel. One of them was also childish, and a paralytic. The dining-room was then visited, and the good Mother showed them the large basket of bread consumed at every meal.

"But who supports you, good Mother?" asked Allie in astonishment.

"God and St. Joseph," she answered, confidently. "When we are in need of anything, we say to St. Joseph, 'Dear St. Joseph! we want so and so. Tell our Lord; ask him for it;' and, *voilà*, we have it,—yes, we have it! Once we had no straw for the mattresses. We begged for some, but they did not give it to us; so we put a piece of straw around St. Joseph's neck—that little statue there—and we said, 'St. Joseph, stay so till you bring us some straw!' The poor old people begged that we would not put St. Joseph in disgrace, but we said, 'Pray hard, then for the straw, that he may be soon released.' Behold, the next morning came a wagon-load of straw to our door! I could tell you many such wonderful things. Love St. Joseph, dear children; he will give you all you ask."

It was now growing late, and Mrs. Mor-

gan prepared to take her leave. The good Mother thanked the children for their gift of apples and tobacco, and Freddie, anxious that Allie should have credit for the whole, told where the money had come from wherewith to purchase the latter.

"I intend to save rags, after this, good Mother," he said in conclusion, "and bring the poor old men tobacco all the time."

"You could not please them more," said the good Mother, "for many people do not think to bring it, and we are too poor to buy luxuries. God will bless you for that, as well as if it were food or money, for the poor old men have nearly all been used to it, and it is a comfort to them."

She accompanied them to the door of the Lodge, where she made the children warm themselves. Then, with invitations and promises to come again, they parted, and the children rode thoughtfully home in the evening twilight, well pleased with

their visit to the Home of the Aged, and filled with admiration for the lowly and self-sacrificing mission of the Little Sisters of the Poor.



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